Feb. 16, 1998

THE NEW YORKER

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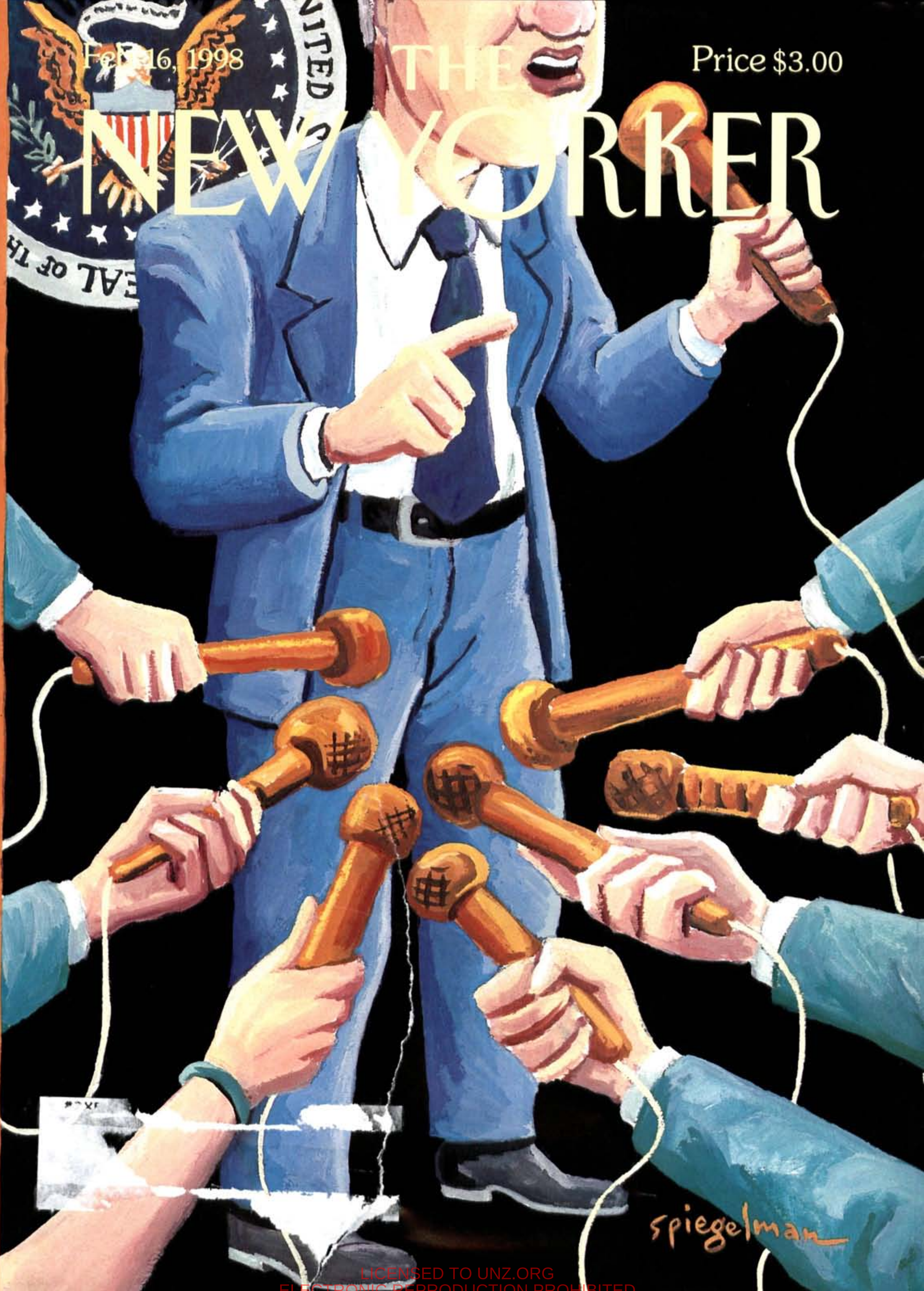
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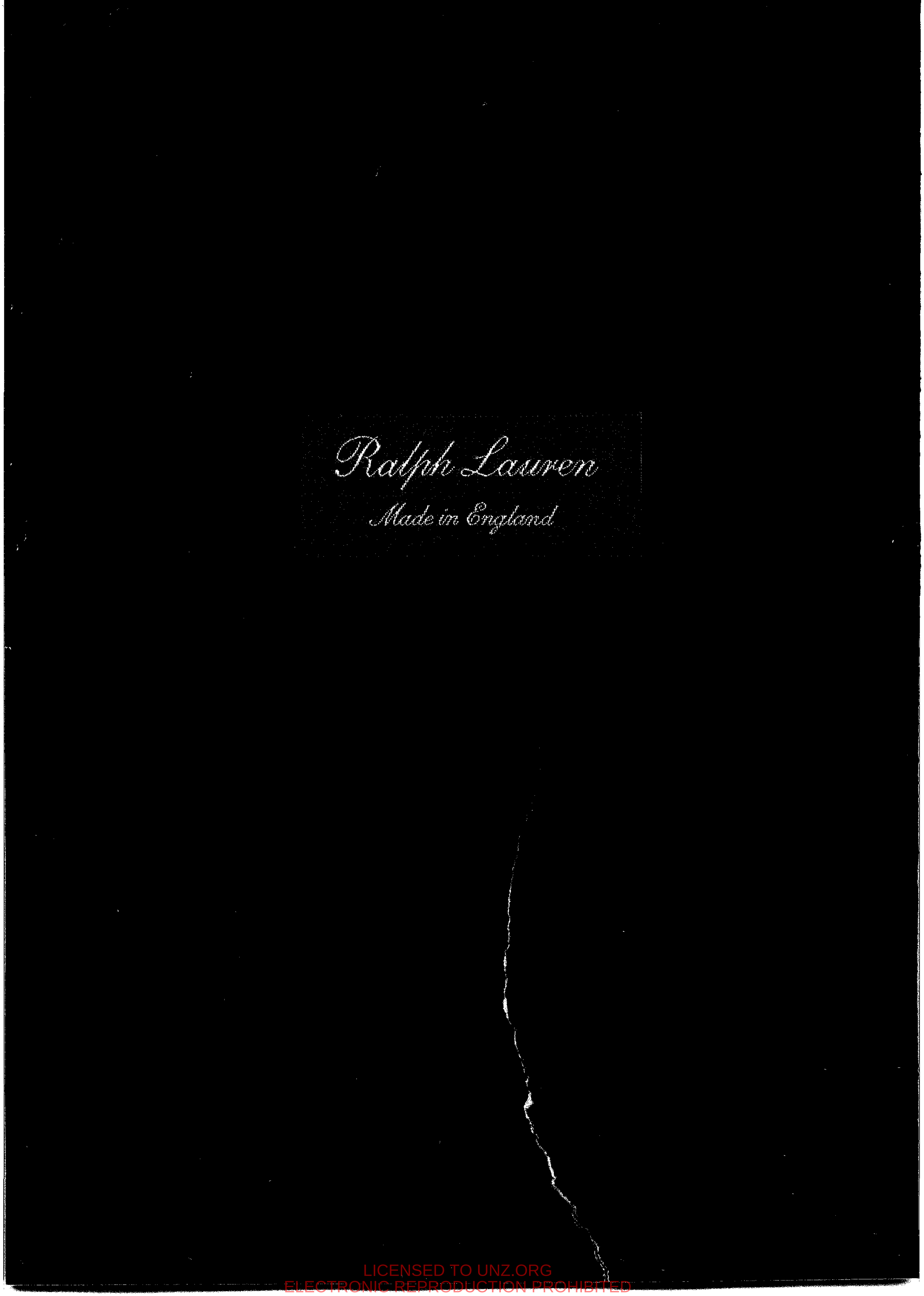
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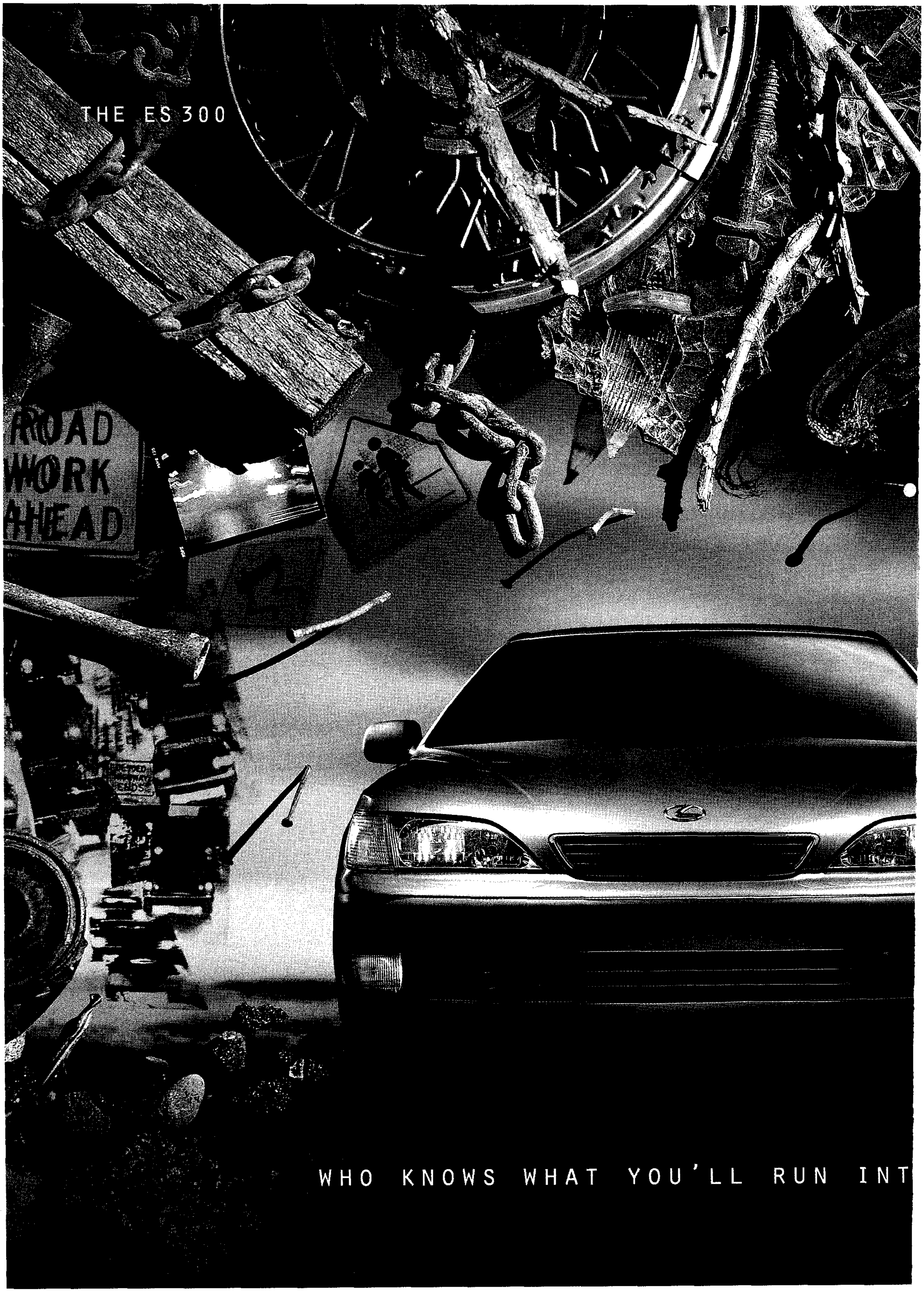
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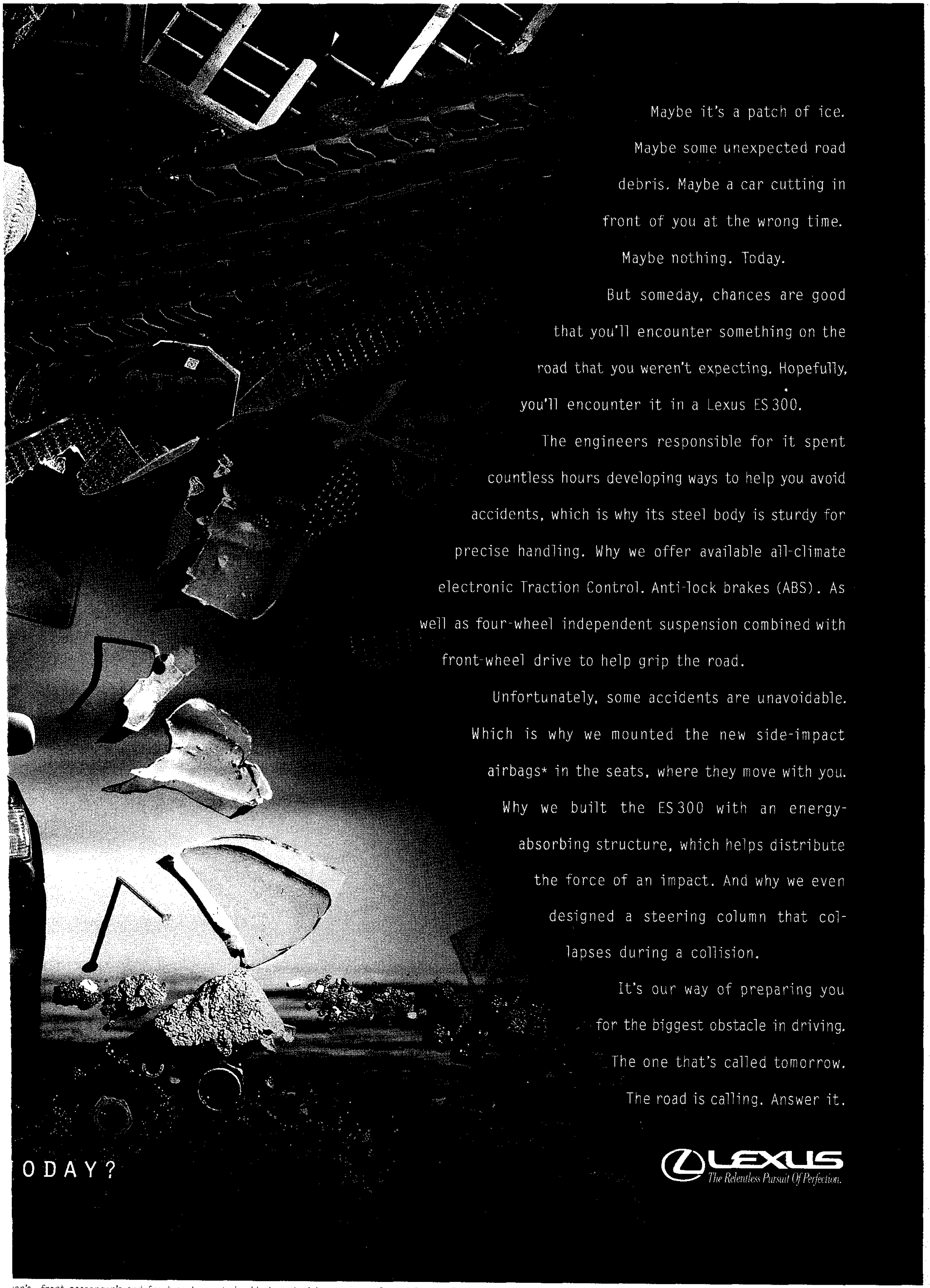

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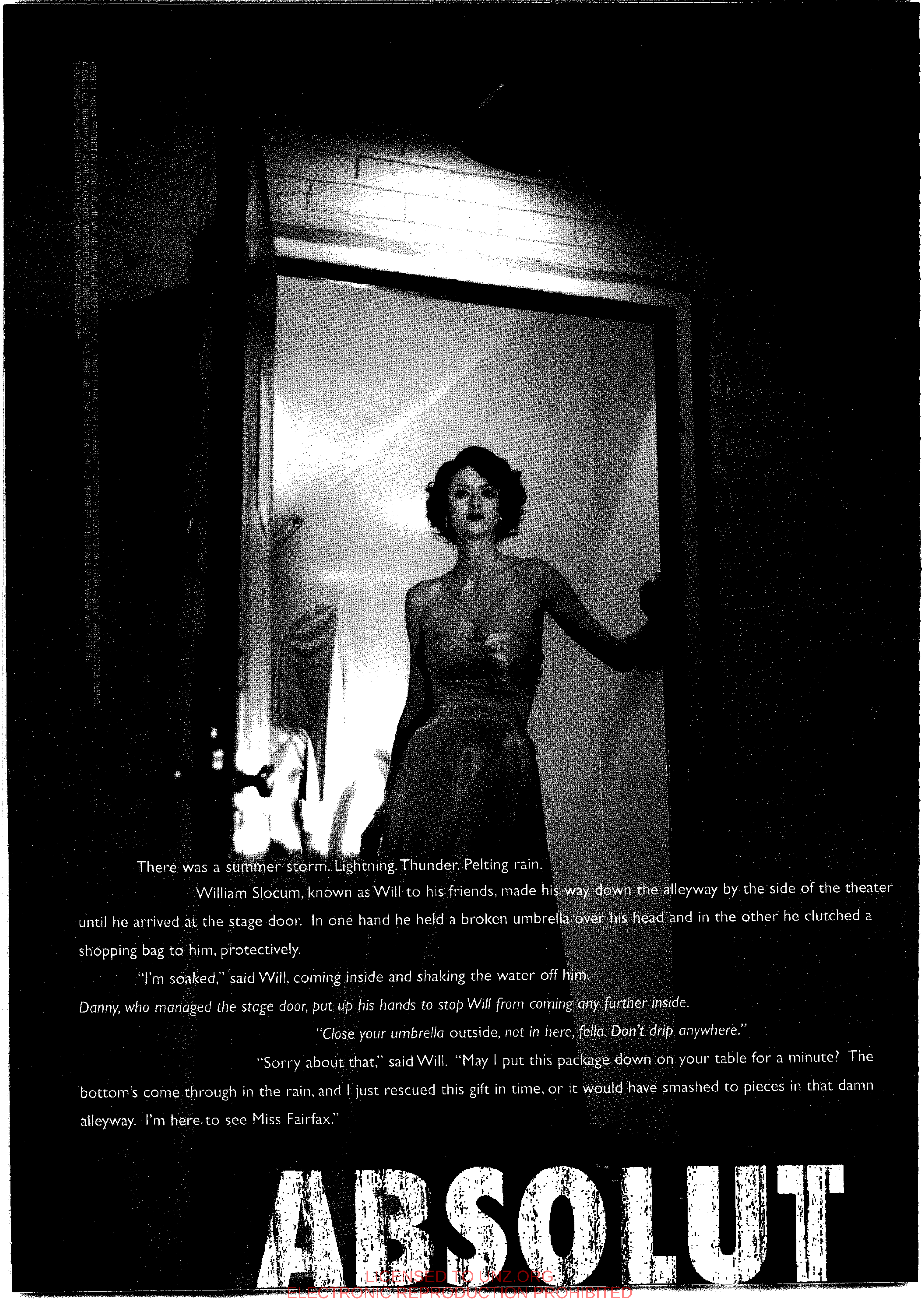

There was a summer storm. Lightning. Thunder. Pelting rain.

William Slocum, known as Will to his friends, made his way down the alleyway by the side of the theater until he arrived at the stage door. In one hand he held a broken umbrella over his head and in the other he clutched a shopping bag to him, protectively.

"I'm soaked," said Will, coming inside and shaking the water off him.

Danny, who managed the stage door, put up his hands to stop Will from coming any further inside.

"Close your umbrella outside, *not in here, fella. Don't drip anywhere."*

"Sorry about that," said Will. "May I put this package down on your table for a minute? The bottom's come through in the rain, and I just rescued this gift in time, or it would have smashed to pieces in that damn alleyway. I'm here to see Miss Fairfax."

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THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY. STORY BY DOMINICK DUNNE

"Is she expecting you?" Danny picked up his list and perused it. "Miss Fairfax didn't tell me she was expecting any visitors."

"She's not expecting me. It's a surprise," said Will.

"Does she know you?"

"Oh, yes. We used to be married."

"Name?"

"William Slocum, but it will spoil the surprise."

"Okay, okay," said Danny, having sized him up: Good suit. Good shirt. Good shoes. "Go on up. Dressing room #8 on the second floor. Here, don't forget your package."

Sophie Fairfax was sitting at her dressing table, applying cold cream over her theatrical makeup, when there was a knock at her door. "You can't come in yet, whoever it is," she called out. Then she added, "Who is it?"

"Me," said Will, opening the door.

"Oh, for God's sake, Will, what the hell are you doing here?" she asked. "How did you get by Danny at the stage door? He's supposed to keep people like you out."

"I told him we used to be married," said Will.

"You're the only 42-year-old man I know who still acts like an undergraduate prankster. I told you when I left you that the act was getting tired," said Sophie, rubbing her face with Kleenex. "Did you see the play?"

"Yes."

"No compliments?"

"You were wonderful."

"I'm not supposed to have to beg for that. That should have been your entrance line. What's that bedraggled package you're clasping to your bosom?"

"You may not believe this, Sophie, but I miss you," said Will.

"Enough, enough," replied Sophie.

"You may not believe this either, but when I left my apartment, this bottle of Absolut was beautifully wrapped in silver paper with dark blue ribbons, in honor of your birthday, but I was jostled in the subway, and it dropped on the floor and got kicked, which is why the paper's torn. There was a card, such a funny card, saying "Forgive me" — perfect for the occasion — but it seems to have gotten lost, and then the shopping bag got wet and the bottom came out and it almost dropped again in the alley, and, anyway, Happy Birthday."

"I remember a time when your presents came in little velvet boxes," said Sophie, starting to apply her street makeup.

"When you moved out, you threw a velvet box at me, and I got a black eye," said Will.

"You did not get a black eye," replied Sophie.

"Almost." He placed the bottle on her dressing table. "This seemed more appropriate under the circumstances. I didn't want to be showy."

"I'm mad about the bottle," said Sophie. "Perfect for forsythia."

"How about a nip on a rainy night off Broadway?"

"Oh, why not? Are you planning on taking me out to supper?"

DUNNE.

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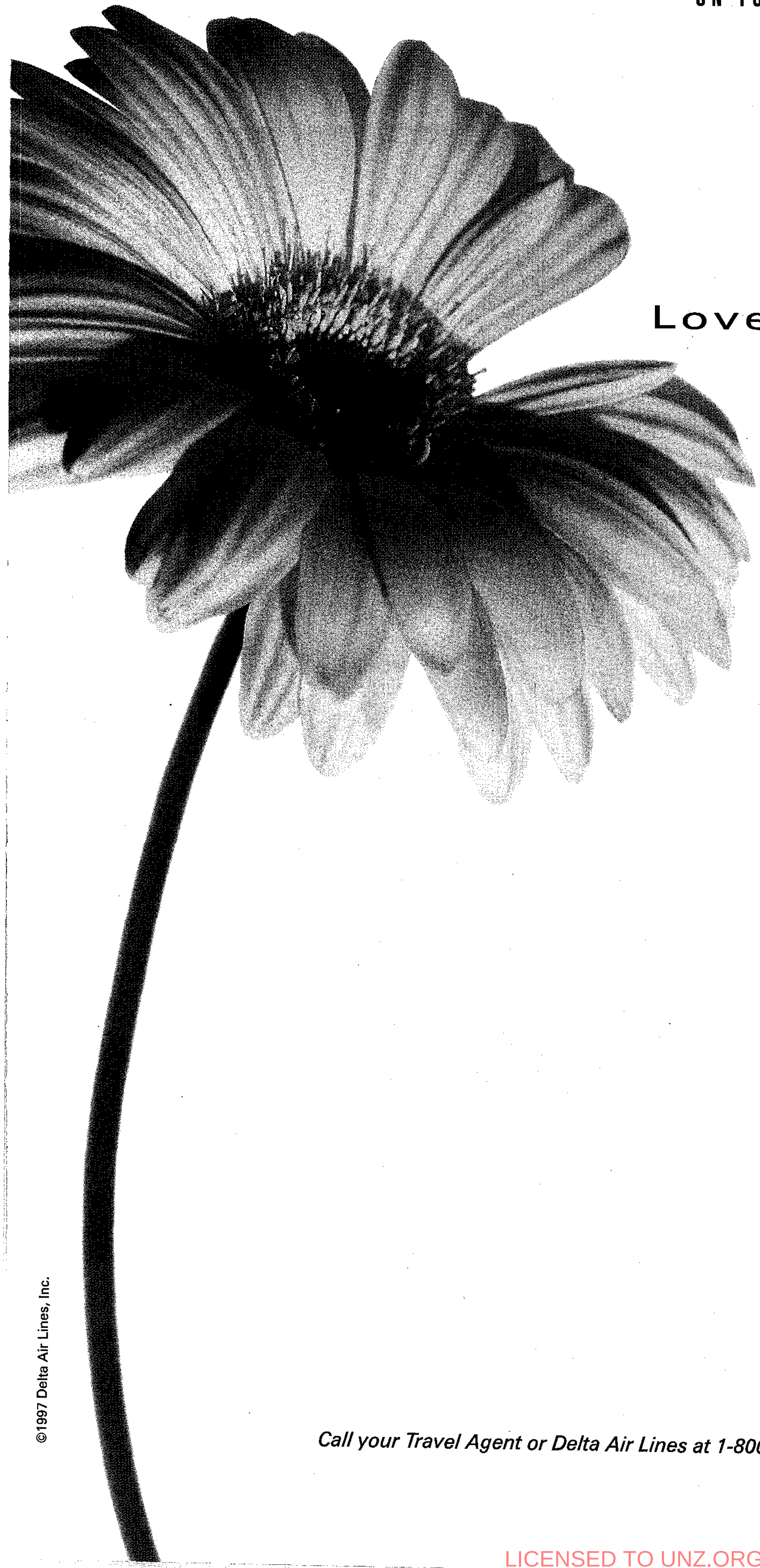

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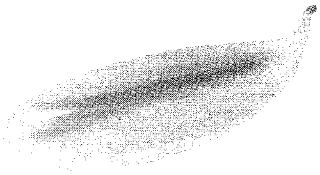

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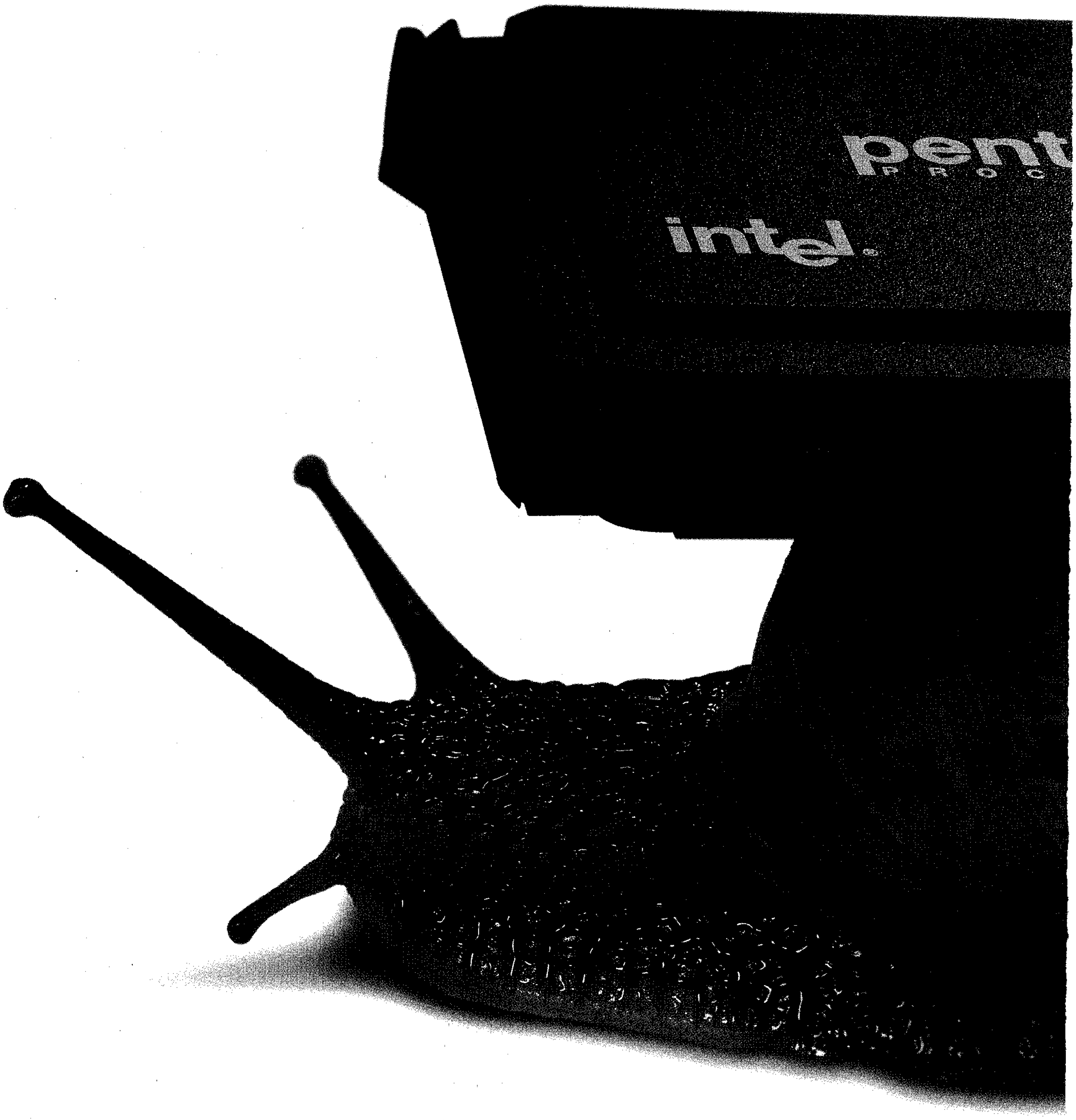
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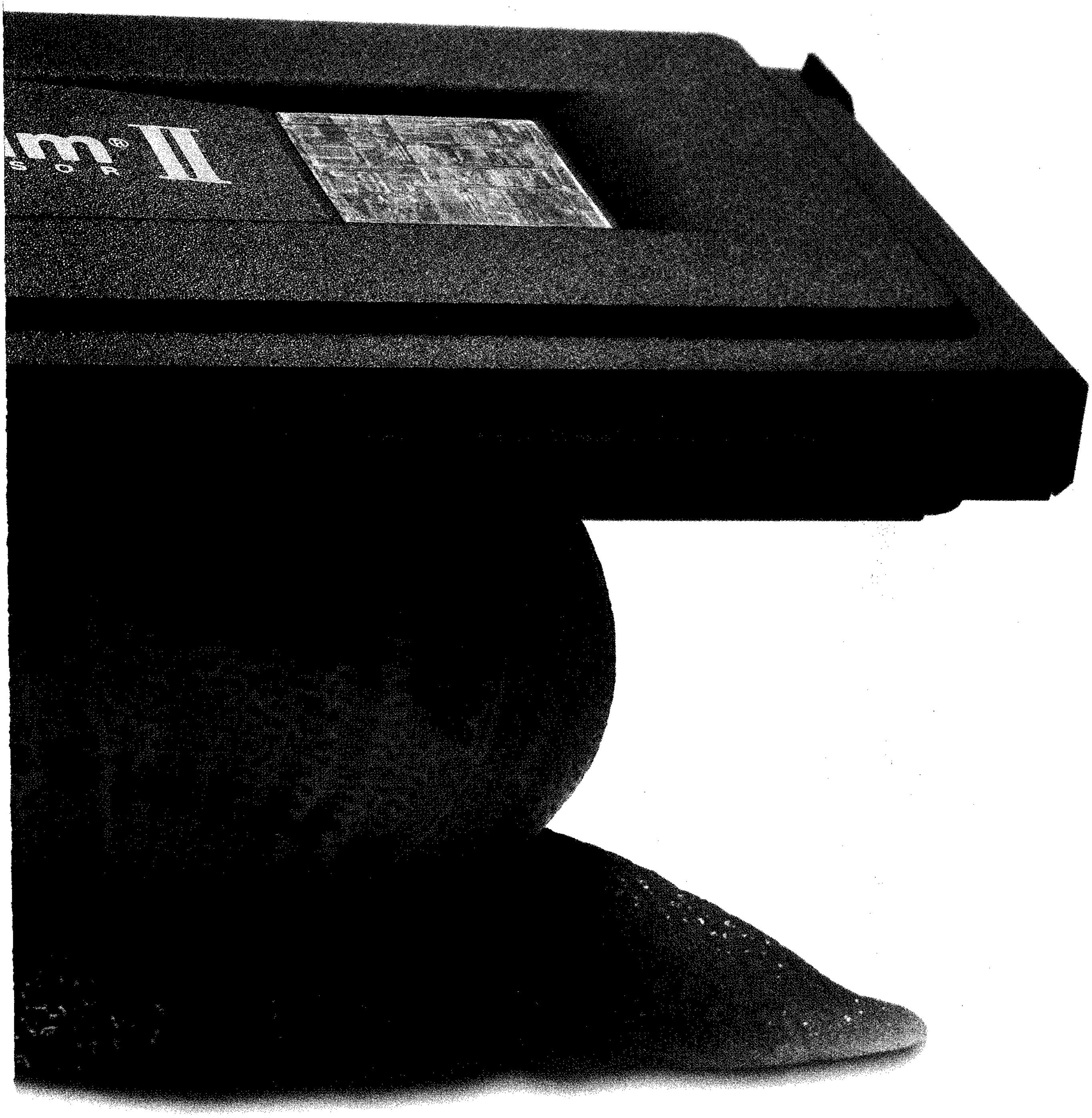

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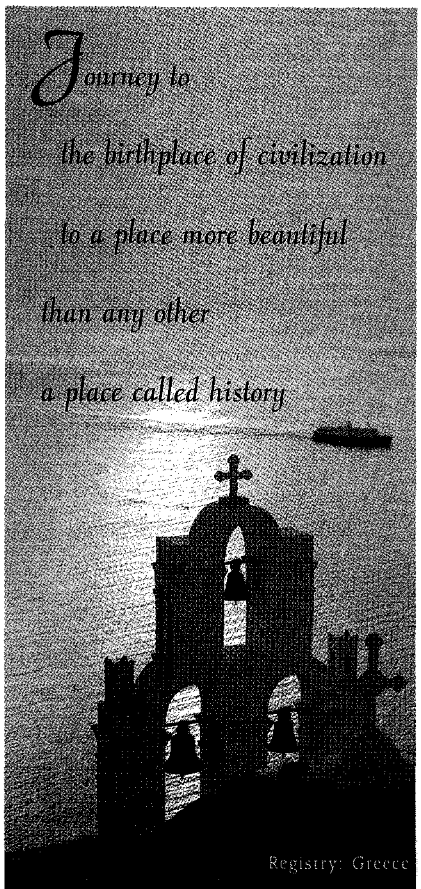

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COMMENT

SACKING SADDAM

Do we know what we're after in Iraq?

SADDAM HUSSEIN, in the seven years since the Gulf War, has had a standing invitation to give up his arsenal of chemical and biological weapons in exchange for relief from stringent international economic sanctions and readmittance into the world community. Considering the Iraqi leader's record as a war criminal, it's an extremely generous invitation, yet Saddam has chosen not to accept it. Evidently, he doesn't much care that his resistance has reduced his once prosperous subjects to pauperage. Nor does he seem to mind that thousands of Iraqis may die if—as now seems likely—he again provokes a war with the United States. Saddam, after all, has exterminated sizable elements of his own population and wasted untold legions of Iraqi lives in futile wars against Iran and Kuwait. His gambit in defying Washington and the United Nations has been based on his perception that his enemy doesn't have the stomach to fight him to his death; moreover, he clearly enjoys the belief that he's winning, and it certainly appears that he gains strength from the "martyrdom" of his people. So now, as the United States once again musters for an air war against Iraq, public debate is taking shape around a nasty question: Will we fight until Saddam is eliminated, and, if not, at what point will we stop?

The Clinton Administration's position has been that a renewed war with Iraq is inevitable only if Saddam wishes it to be. Should he suddenly agree to submit every suspect inch of his realm to the U.N. inspectors, the United States has said that we will hang fire. On the other hand, as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said last week in Cairo, "If diplomacy fails, sole responsibility for the grave consequences that would follow will lie at the feet of the government of Iraq." Saddam is clearly the fundamental cause of Iraq's anguish, but the broader breakdown of diplomacy owes a great deal to the Clinton Administration's failure to maintain the original Gulf War coalition that was forged by the Bush Administration. The present Iraq crisis is a direct consequence of the Clintonian preference for casual troubleshooting, rather than concrete and principled foreign policymaking. As Albright raced around the Middle East last week, trying to round up last-minute support, French and Russian diplomats, impatient to reopen trade with Iraq, were bending over backward to compromise with Saddam. Arab leaders have little love to lose for the Iraqi, but their generally tepid re-

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sponse to Albright's appeals appeared to reflect deep skepticism about America's commitment to what seems a very clear-cut cause. For Saddam is a type well known by this late date in the century: the megalomaniac tyrant whose only real strength derives from his enemies' weaknesses, who makes the world dance to his threats, and who cannot be stopped except by overwhelming force.

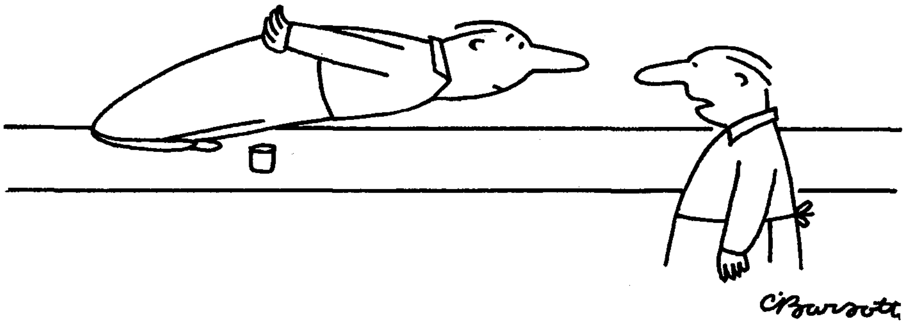
The resistance that any person of conscience must feel before endorsing the use of such force is possibly the most powerful first-strike weapon in Saddam Hussein's arsenal. When the United States called a halt to the original Gulf War without finishing him off, we may have thought that we had taught him to play by our rules, but what he had learned instead was how to play us. If the original Gulf War was about oil and American muscle in the post-Cold War Middle East, the renewal of war, as Washington proposes it, will be about dismantling what remains of Saddam's doomsday arsenal.

But we don't really know the size of this arsenal. We don't really know where it is. We have no clue to how many Iraqis we may have to kill before we can claim success. The only thing we know for sure is that until Saddam Hussein is out of power he will continue to provoke us, and yet the one thing the Clinton Administration has made clear about its war plans is that it has no intention of engaging in the sort of ground war that is presumed necessary for doing away with him. And, even if an American bomb succeeds in knocking Saddam from his throne, there is no consensus—indeed, there has hardly been any debate—on whom we would wish to see in his place. The growing American chorus of pundits and politicians who call for Saddam's head have as little to say about a successor as those who prefer an indefinite bombing campaign have to say about how to deal with Saddam in the aftermath.

President Clinton is an uncertain Commander-in-Chief. Having moved to the brink of war without first declaring a firm objective and without building solid international support, he has painted himself into a corner. To withdraw from the Gulf without fighting would look spineless, and to fight just a little, to save face, is likely to create more problems than it solves. The potential for anti-American backlash is hardly limited to the Middle East. Russia's President Yeltsin, saying that he will not tolerate an American strike against Iraq, has warned wildly that such an action could spark a world war. In a more plausible scenario, the sort of limited bombing campaign that President Clinton seems to favor would probably leave a bruised but belligerent Saddam in power, inviting a surge of international sympathy for lifting sanctions. In this way, we stand to make him a martyr.

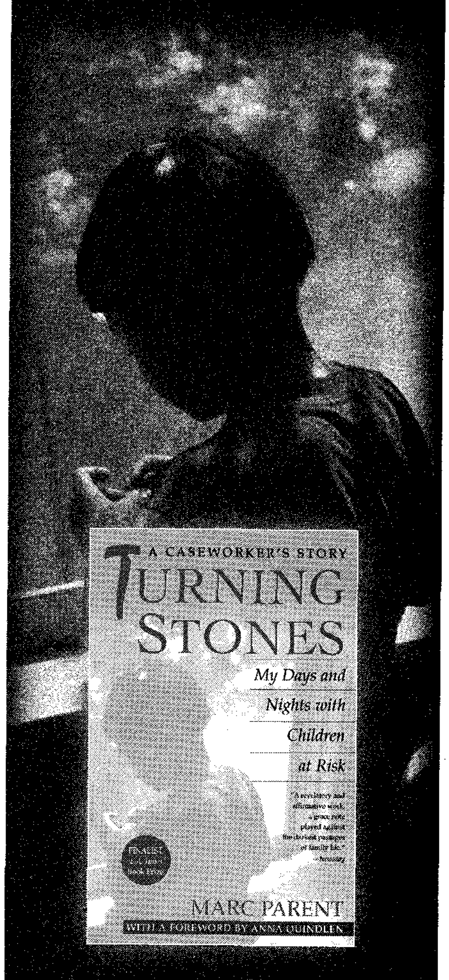
Still, Washington strategists speak of raining bombs on Iraq before the month is out. Total darkness is favored for an initial demolition of Iraqi air defenses, and beginning on February 20th the skies over Baghdad will be moonless for six nights running. An armada of some thirty United States warships and three hundred combat aircraft waits in and around the Persian Gulf for the order to strike. If at the eleventh hour Saddam Hussein capitulates to a comprehensive United Nations weapons inspection, it might be a long time before we will know whether he has spared us the horror of war or merely postponed—and possibly heightened—it. Most likely, we will simply go once more a-bombing.

As the Clintonians say, it's still up to Saddam. But after we drop our first bomb it will be up to us. If we can't define before we fly into Gulf War II precisely what we hope to accomplish and how we hope to follow through, we may soon find ourselves preparing for Gulf War III. —PHILIP GOUREVITCH



"O.K., you could have been great. Now get off the bar."

"There is no system, there are only people—children don't fall through cracks, they fall through fingers."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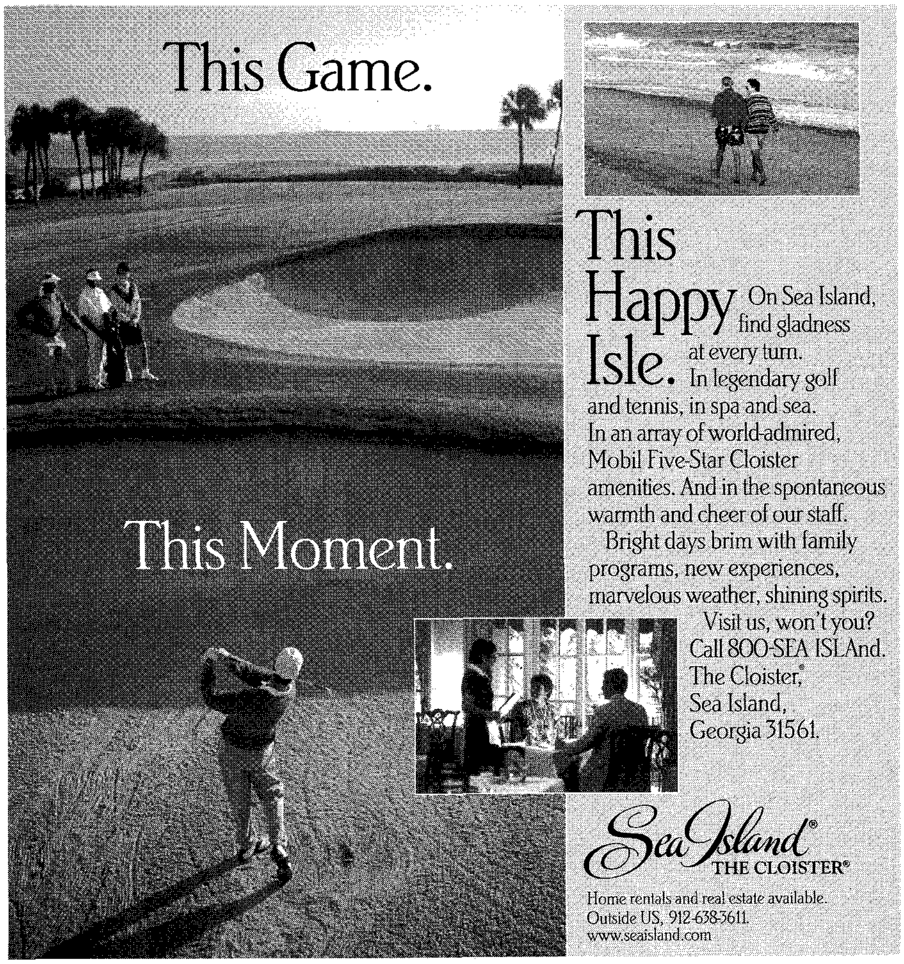
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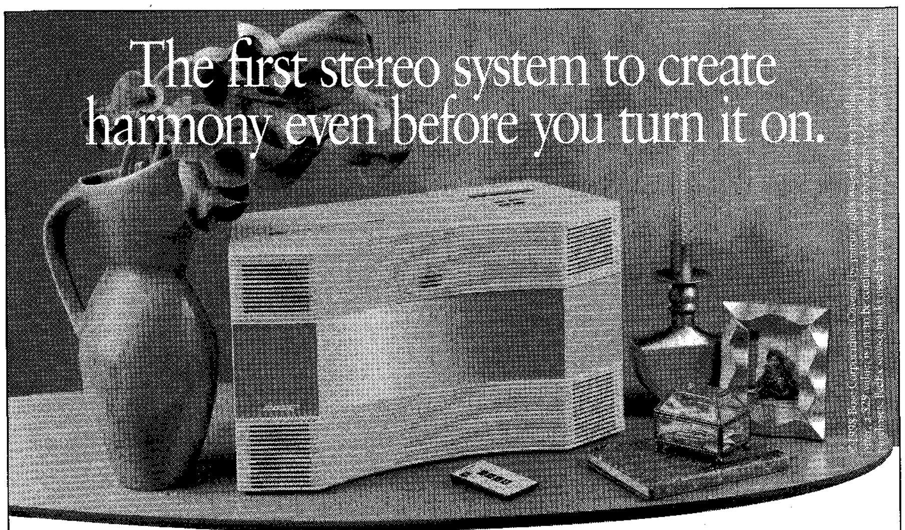
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CONTRIBUTORS

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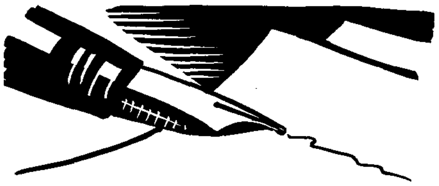
THE MAIL



VIRTUAL REALITY

Though it may seem to Kurt Andersen that giving journalism away free when advertising revenues are low is "irrational exuberance" ("The Digital Bubble," January 19th), MSNBC, the site I help oversee, is visited by three million different users a month, and to expect that advertisers will eventually want to reach them is not unreasonable. Major news is broken on-line with increasing frequency, as we saw recently with the latest Clinton scandal, and the number of people turning to the Internet the day a story breaks is well into the millions. Our efforts to capture a share of an audience this huge are part of a meticulous and quite rational business plan. Whether or not our efforts will prove profitable remains to be seen, but researchers say that the Internet-advertising marketplace will soon exceed a billion dollars annually. Think back to the pace of the cable-television revolution in the late seventies, when cable was in its infancy, and you will get a sense of the speed of today's Internet revolution. Then understand that the Internet is penetrating homes and businesses more rapidly than cable ever did. This is not "wishfulness"; this is reality.

MERRILL BROWN
Editor in Chief, MSNBC on the Internet
Redmond, Wash.

When Mr. Andersen says that almost no one relies on the Internet as much as journalists and financial professionals do, he is forgetting the dependency of fields such as manufacturing, record-keeping, weather forecasting, engineering design, medical imaging, and global-communication networks—among others—upon digital technology. Professionals in these fields represent an enormous group of digital users, and, to do them justice, they're not the ones responsible for the on-line frenzy Andersen rightly criticizes.

LEONARD F. CIPRIANO
North Bethesda, Md.

Mr. Andersen may think that large media companies are rushing to cyberspace like lemmings to the sea, but newspaper circulation and network viewership are down and Web use is skyrocketing. Media companies, it seems, are chasing their own fleeing audience.

JOHN MCGRATH
On-Line Producer, Columbia Journalism Review
New York City

HISTORY FOR THE MASSES

Simon Schama is right to say that "historians ought not to gripe too much" about historical anomalies in modern films ("Clio at the Multiplex," January 19th). The use of contemporary sensibilities in the treatment of historical subjects is a venerable tradition. Shakespeare's medieval histories reflect the sensibilities of Elizabethan England, and Racine's Attic tragedies reflect not the attitudes of ancient Greece but those of seventeenth-century France. If making art accessible to the audience is a priority, verisimilitude in drama is not necessarily the best option.

STUART SPENCER
New York City

LITERARY CIRCLES

I have one small objection to James Surowiecki's thoughtful review of my book "The Circle of Innovation" ("Company Man," January 19th): he suggests that outsourcing key activities (a practice I recommend) as opposed to outsourcing only trivial ones, such as mowing the lawn in front of the corporate headquarters, could result in a "hollowed out" organization. How ironic that this criticism should appear in the Books section of the magazine. As I see it, publishers have done rather well over the years by outsourcing key activities—like the actual writing of their books—to independent contractors called authors.

TOM PETERS
Tinmouth, Vt.

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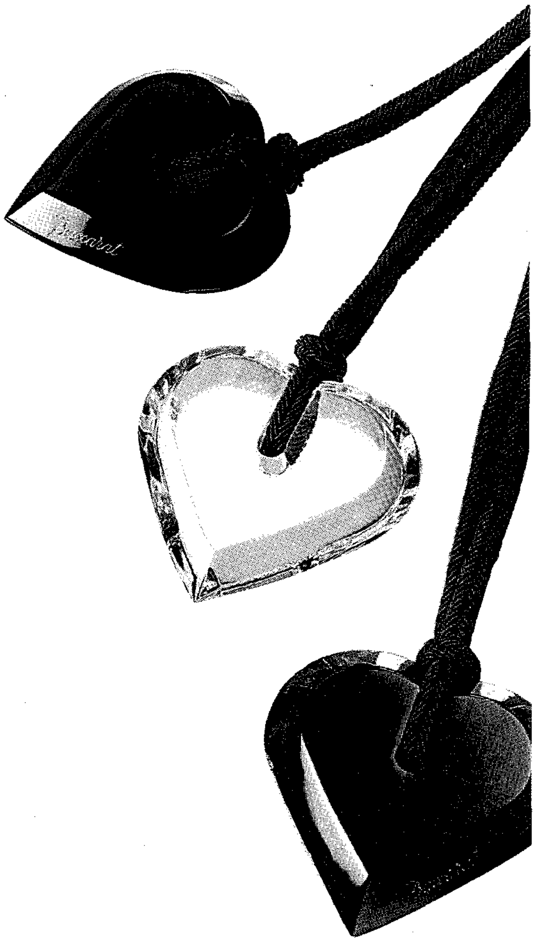

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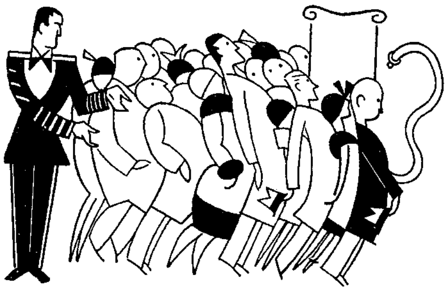

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Beauty of Queen Leenane—The Atlantic Theatre Company presents a dark comedy, set in County Galway, by the young Irish playwright Martin McDonagh. Previews begin Feb. 11. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

Cabaret—Natasha Richardson, Alan Cumming, Ron Rifkin, and Mary Louise Wilson star in a Roundabout Theatre revival of the 1966 Kander and Ebb musical. Sam Mendes is the director. Rob Marshall choreographed and co-directed. Previews begin Feb. 13. (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300.)

A Flea in Her Ear—Bill Irwin directs Georges Feydeau's 1907 farce. Mark Linn-Baker leads the cast. The adaptation is by Jean-Marie Besset and Mark O'Donnell. Previews begin Feb. 11. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Freak—John Leguizamo ("Spic-O-Rama") portrays dozens of characters in his new one-man comedy. Directed by David Bar Katz. Preview on Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 12 at 6:45. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—John Cameron Mitchell wrote and has the title role in a musical about a German Cold War bride turned rock singer. In previews through Feb. 13. Opens Feb. 14 at 10. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

I Will Come Back—The Judy Garland impersonator Tommy Femia pursues his livelihood in this musical about the singer's life. In previews. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

The Maiden's Prayer—The Vineyard Theatre presents a new play by Nicky Silver. In previews. (108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Mizlansky/Zilinsky; or, Schmucks—Nathan Lane and Lewis J. Stadlen star in a new comedy by Jon Robin Baitz. Staged by Joe Mantello. In previews through Feb. 15. Opens Feb. 17 at 7:15. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Moe Green Gets It in the Eye—A new play by Tony DiMurro ("The Coyote Bleeds"), in which the lives of two young brothers in the Mafia take opposite directions. Previews begin Feb. 13. (La Tea Theatre, 107 Suffolk St. 539-8836.)

Richard II—Bradford Cover portrays the king, in a Pearl Theatre staging of Shakespeare's play. In previews. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Scare the Kids!—A suspense comedy written and directed by Bill Doyle. Feb. 12-14 at 8 and Feb. 15 at 2. (Center Stage, 48 W. 21st St. 501-9895.)

The Sound of Music—The hills are alive (aah-aah-aaaaaaaaah) again. Rebecca Luker is Maria. Susan H. Schulman is the director. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Strike Up the Band—City Center's Encores! series kicks off its fifth season with a concert staging of George and Ira Gershwin's 1927 musical. Lynn Redgrave, Philip Bosco, Judy Kuhn, and Jere Shea are in the cast. Feb. 12-13 at 8, Feb. 14 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 15 at 6:30. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Theatre for a New Audience—Presenting repertory performances of "Richard II" and "Richard III." Ron Daniels is the director. In previews through Feb. 14. Opening Feb. 15 at 2 and 7:30, respectively. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

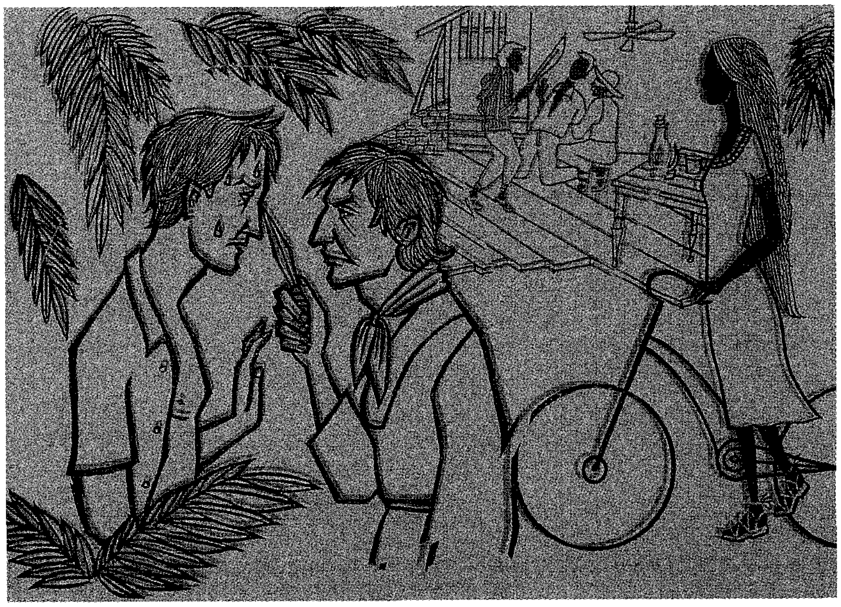
Three Sisters—The Moscow Art Theatre's staging of Chekhov's drama. Performances are in Russian with simultaneous English translation. Feb. 11-14 at 7:30. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100.)

You Can't Take It with You—The National Asian American Theatre Company and the Ma-Yi Theatre's co-production of the 1936 Kaufman and Hart comedy. Previews begin Feb. 14. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 505-3003.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—Three of Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories, beguilingly told by the actor David Margulies. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220. Closes Feb. 14.)

Benita Canova—Richard Foreman's latest concoction is a lush exploration of erotic violence, consisting mainly of a debate between Benita (Joanna P. Adler)—who is, perhaps, the new girl at the bordello—and Madame (David Greenspan), about the nature of sex and the nature of perception. A memorable, perceptive, and voyeuristic experience. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)



Sam Shepard's "Eyes for Consuela," at Manhattan Theatre Club.

HIROSHI TANABE

Black Humor—Topical comedy, written and performed by the political satirist Lewis Black. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Closes March 1.)

The Capeman—This musical, which marks Paul Simon's theatrical début, is based on a notorious crime that took place in New York in 1959: the killing of two innocent boys by a sixteen-year-old member of a Puerto Rican gang. The songs blend Latin music with doo-wop, country, and rhythm and blues, and some of the melodies are lovely. The lyrics and the book, which Simon co-wrote with Derek Walcott, are another matter—they're a wallow in phony pieties about guilt and redemption. Though the show has a few touches of imagination in some of the images created by Bob Crowley, the set designer, and in the projections of Wendell K. Harrington, they aren't enough to free it from its prison of self-satisfied ideas or to give it a feeling of real theatricality. The cast features a leaden Ruben Blades, Ednita Nazario, and, as the young killer, Marc Anthony, who at least has presence and a good voice. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/9/98.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—Theatrically, this revival and reworking of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, under the direction of James Lapine, is generally fine. But the play's realism is also its fundamental flaw. One of the truths we take away from Anne's diary is that we *can't* know what it was like. (12/15/97) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Eyes for Consuela—Sam Shepard's new play, which stars David Strathairn, is an adaptation of Octavio Paz's 1976 short story "The Blue Bouquet." Terry Kinney is the director. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

The Good Doctor—Andre DeShields stars in this Melting Pot Theatre Company revival, a 1973 adaptation by Neil Simon of eleven Chekhov stories. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 279-4200. Closes March 1.)

Goose-Pimples—Under the clear-eyed direction of Scott Elliott, the New Group brings a near-excruciating realism to Mike Leigh's bleakly comic 1981 portrayal of the cruelty disappointment can inspire. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 1.)

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A VIACOM COMPANY

Gun-Shy—In Richard Dresser's romantic comedy, an ex-couple finds divorce as difficult to maintain as marriage. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 22.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—A mean little cocktail from Sandra Bernhard, composed of equal parts stand-up, performance art, cabaret, world-weariness, and dish. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-7171. Closes Feb. 15.)

Jackie—A complete delight. The playwright, Gip Hoppe, may be satirizing what we think we know about the former First Lady (Margaret Colin), but he does it with such heart and high comedy that you may not want to leave the theatre. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

June Moon—Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman's 1929 comedy, set in the world of Tin Pan Alley, is a loving satire of show-biz and musical-comedy conventions, and it has been given an appropriately loving revival under the direction of Mark Nelson. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Last Session—A musical about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes March 1.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has created a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film, submerging the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Lypsinka Is Harriet Craig!—The drag artistes Lypsinka and Varla Jean Merman join forces in a song-and-dance version of the 1950 Joan Crawford film. (Mother, 432 W. 14th St., at Washington St. 539-7585.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mentalist claims that his highly entertaining mind-reading act is both hocus-pocus-free and scam-free. Still, his fascinating "tricks" seem like magic, and at times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

My One Good Nerve—Charles Nelson Reilly directs Ruby Dee in a one-woman show the actress adapted from her book of the same title. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb, the teen-age millionaires who murdered a child in Chicago in 1924, sweeps its audience into the boys' friendship without ever losing sight of the brutal murder—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, carry off seamlessly. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Phaedra in Delirium—An inelegant, clichéd retelling of Phaedra's doomed love for her stepson, written by Susan Yankowitz. Even the vibrant central performance by Kathleen Chalfant can only hint at the power of the story. Sandra Shipley and Peter Jay Fernandez ably round out the cast; Alison Summers directed. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Feb. 15.)

Pride's Crossing—Tina Howe's new play is a tedious switchback ride up a mountain of memories from the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow, who is ninety and once swam the English Channel. Fortunately, Mabel is portrayed by Cherry Jones, who polishes all the tics, fumbles, and feisty outbursts of a nonagenarian to a high shine. Jack O'Brien directed. (1/5/98) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Ragtime—Although Terrence McNally has skillfully streamlined E. L. Doctorow's epic novel chronicling three turn-of-the-century New York families (Wasp, Jewish, and black), what we have here is not just narrative; it's a historical pageant designed along the magisterial theatrical lines of Noël Coward's "Cavalcade" and Jerome Kern's "Showboat." And it's a big, brave, passionate gamble that brings the American musical back to its roots as populist commercial entertainment. Masterfully directed by Frank Galati. Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens wrote the score. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

R & J—Four students at a boys' boarding school mount a production of "Romeo and Juliet," in this adaptation by Joe Calarco. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The sleight-of-hand artist returns to the stage with an encore production of his 1994 one-man show. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3471.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it (if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively): its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, Andrew Jackness's sets, and Jane Greenwood's costumes. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Scotland Road—A young woman who claims to be a survivor of the Titanic disaster, a man who claims to be the great-grandson of John Jacob Astor (who went down with the ship): these are the central characters in Jeffrey Hatcher's play, which is concerned less with the real truth than with how we create our own version of it. The good ideas here manage to stay afloat in a sea of unconvincing dialogue, but only just. Melia Bensussen directed; David Van Tieghem designed the fearsome, haunting sound effects. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Feb. 15.)

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—A comic revue inspired by the Fodor's handbook of the same title. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

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Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, in "The Show Goes On."

ADAM LOWENSTEIN

1776—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. (9/8/97) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Shopping and Fucking—British playwright Mark Ravenhill's portrait of dissolute youth in London. Max Stafford-Clark and Gemma Bodinetz co-directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

The Show Goes On—A compendium of songs by two seventyish musical-theatre pros, the lyricist-librettist Tom Jones and the composer Harvey Schmidt. For once, they're the stars of their own show; Schmidt plays the piano and Jones provides a charming review of their forty-year partnership, which has been responsible for such musicals as "110 in the Shade," "I Do! I Do!," and that longest of long runs, "The Fantasticks." (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Feb. 28.)

Some of My Best Friends: A Collection of Characters—A one-woman show written by and starring T'Keyah Crystal Keymáh ("In Living Color"). (The Producers Club, 358 W. 44th St. 354-2220.)

Song at Sunset—A one-man show about the playwright Sean O'Casey, written and directed by his daughter, Shivaun, and performed by the Irish actor Niall Buggy. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Feb. 15.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians, starring Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. The sandpapery friction that the twosome created so successfully on TV isn't much in evidence—they seem reduced to lovability. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A View from the Bridge—Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece proves, in this Roundabout Theatre revival, a potent and durable American fable. (1/5/98) (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes Feb. 22.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Jeff Baron's sweet if predictable Upper West Side comedy, about two Jewish men of different generations. Eli Wallach, in a masterly performance, finds great dignity in the title character, an eighty-six-year-old widower. Lonny Price directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

Wang Dang—Tom Noonan stars in his own dark comedy, about a filmmaker past his prime. (Paradise, 64 E. 4th St. 354-2220. Closes Feb. 28.)

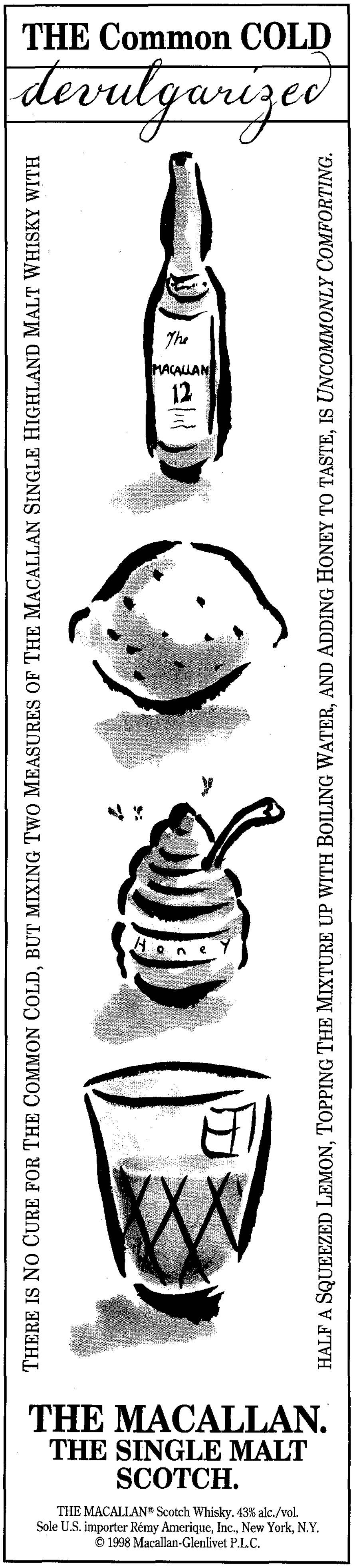
LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER TANGO:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Feb. 11 at 8: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Romeo and Juliet," "Concerto in Five Movements," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Slavonic Dances." . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Urban Dances," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 2: "Raymonda Variations," "Concerto in Five Movements," "Romeo and Juliet," and "The Concert." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Concerto in Five Movements," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 3: "Scotch Symphony," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 8: "I'm Old Fashioned," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "The Four Seasons." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through March 1.)

Ohio Ballet—The Akron-based troupe brings two programs that balance current works, by Heinz Poll, the company choreographer, with such older repertory as "Big City" (1932), by Kurt Jooss, and "The Exiles" (1950), by José Limón. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 10-13 at 8, Feb. 14 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 15 at 2 and 7:30.)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Nami Yamamoto and Guta Hedewig—The collaborators present numerical meditations: "Baker's Dozen," to be seen opening night, deals with triskaidekaphobia; "Suite 214," which premières on Valentine's Day, considers the day's exchanges; and "Thirty," which Hedewig created last year, celebrates her landmark birthday. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Feb. 13-15 at 8:30.)

Carnival—Dance Theatre Workshop continues its choreographers' showcase. Feb. 10-11 at 8: **TIYÉ GIRAUD**. . . . ¶ Feb. 12-13 at 8: **STEFA ZAWERUCHA**. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 8 and Feb. 15 at 3: **ELLIS WOOD**. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Through March 22.)

Urban Bush Women—In three works choreographed by Jawolle Willa Jo Zollar: "Transitions," "Self Portrait," and "Batty Moves." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7148. Feb. 12-13 at 8 and Feb. 14 at 2 and 8.)

"Don't Go Without Your Echo"—While creating this full-length work, Susan Rethorst lent her eight-woman troupe to her fellow-choreographer Tere O'Connor for a day, with an unusual request: wreck the piece. Portions of the wreckage remain, and neon quotation marks light up during these moments. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Feb. 12-15 at 8.)

Kevin Wynn Collection—The twelve-member company presents repertory works and the première of "Nitrate Kisses and Smells of Gasoline." (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 505-3764. Feb. 13 at 9 and Feb. 14-15 at 8.)

"Underground River"—Jane Comfort & Company presents the stages of a woman's emergence from a coma, in a piece for four dancers. "Three Bagatelles for the Righteous," danced to the polemics of Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole, Pat Robertson, et al., is also on the program. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Feb. 12-15 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Ryuichi Sakamoto—The Japanese art rocker and former Yellow Magic Orchestra leader premières his first full-length orchestral work, a sweeping four-movement composition named "Untitled 01," with help from avant-jazz guitarist David Torn, downtown spinner-poseur DJ Spooky, the Electra String Quartet, and an eighteen-piece orchestra. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 945-0505. Feb. 11 at 8.)

Rosemary Clooney—Clooney once said, "Singing is the only thing I've done all my life. I've had lots of boyfriends, one husband, five children, small houses, big houses—but singing is the one constant." When Carter Harman wrote his cover story on her for *Time*, in 1953, she had a beautiful, lilting voice—a voice as pure as Judy Garland's when she sang "Over the Rainbow" in "The Wizard of Oz." Now, keeping the dogs of age at bay, she has tightened her vibrato, shortened her long notes, and dropped to a contralto. Her diction, always clear, has become crystalline, and she has moved behind the beat and turned into—what else?—a jazz singer. She's backed here by the Count Basie Orchestra and the John Pizzarelli Trio. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 11 at 8.)

Billy Joel—The Hicksville native plays for the home-town crowd. (Nassau Coliseum. 516-794-9300. Feb. 11, Feb. 14, and Feb. 16 at 8.)

Sugar Ray—On "Floored," this low-riding, laid-back Southern California skater-punk-and-ska combo took a sound that's been popular for years and, with a healthy mix of prominent cheekbones and frat-boy goofiness, rode it to the top. With Goldfinger. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Feb. 12 at 7:30.)

"Coltrane: A Love Supreme"—A cross-over saxophonist (Michael Brecker), a vocalist (Kevin Mahogany), and a big band (the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band) are among the unlikely elements of this tribute to John Coltrane, who died in 1967. Considering that a Coltrane tribute occurs every time nine out of ten saxophonists put horn to lips, the quirky nuances of this celebration should be welcome. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Martha Wash—The gospel-trained disco belter best known for being one half of the San Francisco duo the Weather Girls ("It's Raining Men"). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Nile Ethiopian Ensemble—The troupe performs the music and dance of the Amhara, Elkeri, and Gurage peoples, among others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 13 at 8.)

"Uhuru Afrika"—Africa has been an obsession for Randy Weston, a Brooklyn-born pianist and composer, for four decades now. His music, though steeped in the language of bop and in big-band grandeur, draws much of its spiritual inspiration from the continent that he called home from 1968 to 1972. This 1960 epic—a full-scale tribute he created in collaboration with the arranger Melba Liston and the poet Langston Hughes—is re-created here by an all-star ensemble that includes Dewey Redman, Eddie Henderson, Cecil Payne, and vocalist Leon Thomas. This is the first installment of Lost Jazz Shrines, a yearlong celebration presented in different venues by ten arts organizations around the country. (See next listing.) (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Feb. 13 at 8.)

"May I Have This Dance?"—On Valentine's Day, the Majestic Theatre turns into the legendary Sonia Ballroom, which was out in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Majestic Big Band, made up of members of the old Ray Abrams Big Band, play all the popular tunes. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, Brooklyn. Feb. 14 at 8.)

"The Syd Straw Heartwreck Show"—The vocalist performs with Rosanne Cash, Loudon Wainwright III, and a band that includes pianist Joe Ruddick, guitarist Marc Ribot, and cellist Michelle Kinney. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. Feb. 14 at 8.)

Black Umfolosi—Eight singers and dancers from Zimbabwe. (Symphony Space. Feb. 14 at 8.)

José Feliciano—The singer and guitarist. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 14 at 8.)

"The Greatest Hits of the Gershwins"—A Valentine's Day sampler of tunes performed by Broadway and cabaret artists, including Karen Mason, Priscilla Baskerville, Bill Dougherty, and Mike Burston. Part of the Lyrics & Lyricists series. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 14 at 8, Feb. 15 at 2:30 and 8, and Feb. 16 at 2 and 8.)

"Jazz at Merkin Hall"—Milt Jackson's agility, vigor, lyricism, and soul are as much on display when he leads his own bands as when he's in the vibraphone berth with the Modern Jazz Quartet; he is one of the music's most important and satisfying improvisers. Cedar Walton, a long-time colleague, provides consummate piano support and much more. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Feb. 16 at 8.)

"Sweet and Low-Down"—Small jazz ensemble plays Gershwin—stop the presses! The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band Sextet—which includes such stylists as trumpeter Jon Faddis and guitarist Howard Alden—brings distinction to this program. Jam sessions aren't one of the band's trademarks; instead, expect imaginative song selection and creative arrangements. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 17 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Rock vagabonds (and Traffic alumni) **DAVE MASON** and **JIM CAPALDI** perform on Feb. 12 with **AL STEWART** ("The Year of the

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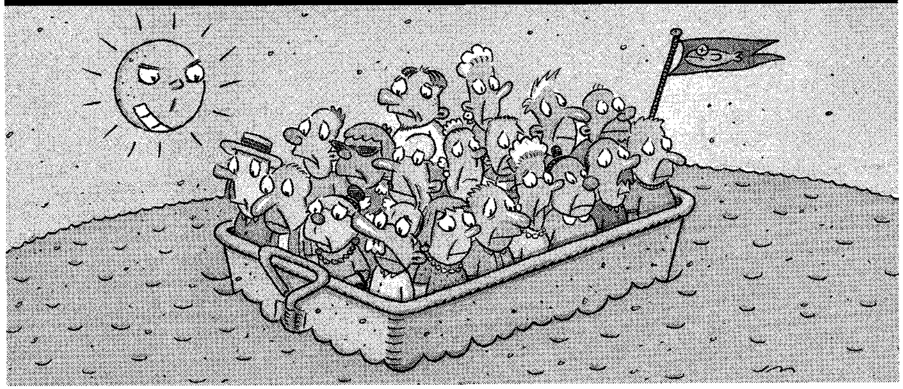

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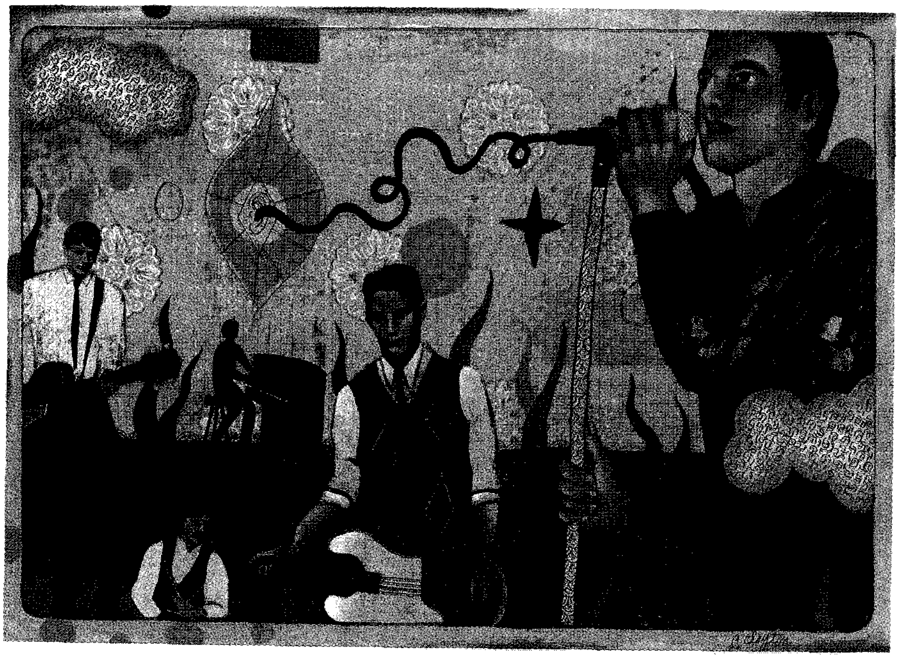
Cat”). Feb. 13-15: Broadway’s **BETTY BUCKLEY** spends the Valentine’s Day weekend at this Village landmark.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Feb. 13: Overshadowed by the more iconoclastic accomplishments of Courtney Love, Thalia Zedek, of **COME,** is still one of the most formidable songwriters in the indie-rock pantheon. Feb. 15: Local upstarts **LES SAVY FAV,** fronted by the charismatic Gibb Slife.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Feb. 13-15: **JOE MC GINTY AND THE LOSER’S LOUNGE** pay tribute to sixties pop legends the Zombies, with help from a long list of admirers, including Jules Shear, Richard Barone, Pierce Turner, and Patti Rothberg. Feb. 17-18: **PETE DROGE,** a smart, smooth neo-folkie out of Portland, Oregon. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Feb. 14: **JONATHAN FIRE*EATER.** Funereal, fey, and irritatingly irresistible, this well-read quintet mixes an early-Doors-style charisma with an old-fashioned Goth sensibility. Its new record, “Wolf Songs for Lambs,” doesn’t quite live up to the hype, but onstage the band has a cool, reptilian presence that belies its youth.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 12: **MAGGIE ESTEP,** the downtown poet, fledgling novelist, and spoken-word artist. With the cool beats and caustic wit of **COTTONMOUTH TEXAS.** Feb. 13: Playful pop from **APPLES IN STEREO.** Feb. 14: **SKELETON KEY.** They were last year’s beloved-local-boys-make-good-but-fail-to-sell-any-records story (see the wildly uneven but often inspired “Fantastic Spikes Through Balloons”); now they return to a smaller venue, where their controlled melodic chaos and percussive muscle ought to generate extreme pleasures.



*Jonathan Fire*Eater, at Irving Plaza.*

CHRISTIAN CLAYTON

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Feb. 13: **SUE GARNER,** bassist and singer for the great alt-pop band Run On, drops in with some songs from her first solo effort, “To Run More Smoothly.” With **FREAKWATER.** Feb. 16: Local boys **FONTAINE** assemble a tight downtown mix of guitar-driven rock and bass-popping funk.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Feb. 14: Singer-guitarist **CLARENCE CARTER,** who after a long R. & B. career made a pop splash in the late sixties and early seventies with “Slip Away” and “Patches.”

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Feb. 12: **BOW WOW WOW.** In which a fondly remembered collection of eighties-era oddities (including a sex-bomb singer named Annabella Lwin, who was fourteen when the band débuted) return to take their rightful place in the New Wave pantheon. Perhaps inspired to reunite by the sure-to-be-huge, all-eighties soundtrack to the movie “The Wedding Singer,” the band is all but certain to perform its legendary version of “I Want Candy.” With the **BUSH TETRAS.** Feb. 14: Hot Tuna founder **JORMA KAUKONEN.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Feb. 11: There were two heroes in the incredibly popular Dave Brubeck group of the fifties and sixties: the poetic saxophonist Paul Desmond and the exacting drummer **JOE MORELLO.** With Brubeck’s mania for tricky time signatures and shifting rhythmic ploys, Morello had his work cut out for him. Three decades later, he’s still got all the right moves. Feb. 12-14: Vocalist **GLORIA LYNNE.** Mondays in February belong to the **CHICO O’FARRILL AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA;** Tuesdays to the **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI JAZZ ORCHESTRA;** and Wednesdays to the **FAMOUS DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Feb. 15: Keyboardist **JOE ZAWINUL,** the mastermind behind Weather Report, is still a fusion man, only now what he’s fusing is jazz, funk, and world music. This Austrian-born former associate of Cannonball Adderley and Miles Davis is nothing if not expansive—and you have to believe in anyone with the talent to compose “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,” “In a Silent Way,” and “Birdland.” Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Feb. 15: The **MOSE ALLISON** trio. Listening to him slam the piano, you might think Jimmy Yancey had been possessed by Monk and Bartók. Southern gentleman Allison is nothing less than a national treasure. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Feb. 12: Bebop, plain but not simple, from a bunch of pros—saxophonist **RALPH LALAMA,** drummer **LEROY WILLIAMS,** pianist **RICHARD WYANDS,** and bassist **JOE FORBES**—who’ve been breathing this music their entire adult lives. Feb. 13-15: With

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Gerry Mulligan and Pepper Adams (the yin and yang of mainstream baritone saxophone) both gone, **GARY SMULYAN** has inherited the defender-of-the-big-horn mantle: he exhibits elements of Mulligan's lyricism and of Adams's drive. Supported by a string section for this special Valentine's Day engagement, he'll undoubtedly call upon his inner romantic to supply the sonic seduction.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Feb. 12: When you reach the level of professionalism, consistency, and inspiration that pianist **JUNIOR MANCE,** drummer **JACKIE WILLIAMS,** and bassist **EARL MAY** can boast, you deserve a place in the jazz pantheon. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Feb. 15: The **RON CARTER** quintet. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Feb. 14: Latin jazz with a hard-bop edge from pianist **HILTON RUIZ,** bassist **JAMIL NASSER,** and, on Feb. 13-14, drummer **JOE GONZALEZ.** Dining.

TABLES FOR TWO

Il Mulino, 86 W. 3rd St. (673-3783)—From the outside, it's easy to mistake Il Mulino for a funeral home. Plain white curtains cover the street-front windows, sounding a note of Old World decorum that feels out of place among the neighborhood's clamorous bars and boîtes. On the inside, however, it's nearly impossible to spot another modest gesture. Methuselahs of wine rise from the teeming antipasto table, and squadrons of black-jacketed waiters whisk by with a court-of-the-Sun-King arrogance that fails to cow the crowd, which is loud and close and seemingly far too delirious to notice.

One is tempted to add a few warnings: reservations are scarce, the phone is nearly always busy, the menu is long and printed in a European cursive, and dinner for four costs only slightly less than a peak-season round-trip ticket to Lake Garda. But such warnings have proven useless in the past. Do try to pay attention to the specials, recited in reassuringly heavy accents. Order anything with truffles and out comes a lugubrious Jacob Marley of a waiter, who extracts the fungus from his bell jar and shaves his decadent prize onto your pasta or risotto. He shrugs when asked his title, and suggests: "*Trufflier.*"

The food is rich but not heavy, balancing an Italian preference for simple ingredients with a Little Italian flair for excess. An appetizer of Belon oysters on the half shell, for instance, arrives with dollops of beluga caviar; the rack of lamb comes with potatoes sautéed in oil, rosemary, garlic, cognac, and Barolo. Even an orange turns into a tableside drama as the waiter cuts each segment free with a six-inch blade and lays the fruit filets (macerated in brandy, framboise, Cointreau, and curaçao) on a manger of caramelized rinds. (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner, Saturdays for dinner only. Entrées $16-$55.)

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era." Through March 1. . . . ¶ An exhibition at the Costume Institute devoted to the work of Gianni Versace. Through March 22. . . . ¶ "Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)." Through Feb. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Fabrications," four architectural projects, two solo and two team efforts, presented in maquettes and with video links to allied exhibits at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Wexner Center for the Arts, in Columbus, Ohio. Through April 28. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years," in both Guggenheim venues, divides the country's art into modern examples (at the SoHo branch) and older ones (here): the latter include jades, bronzes, tomb ceramics, stoneware, sculptures, paintings, and calligraphy. Through June 3. . . . ¶ "After 'Mountains and Sea': Frankenthaler 1956-59." The eponymous painting is famous for a reason: it signaled the artist's arrival, at the age of twenty-three, at a stature of consequence and influence. She had hit on her technique of staining her canvases with diluted, runny paint that melded line and color. In retrospect, it isn't all that surprising to learn that so much seemingly free work was the product of rigorous formal experimentation. There is a pleasing intuitive grace to the fourteen pictures here, but they are loath to let you in. Through May 3. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years." The downtown portion of the museum's retrospective of Chinese art is devoted to modern examples, from 1850 to the present. Through May 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Arthur Dove: A Retrospective." For years the Whitney has been accused of pandering to art-world fashion. The recent Richard Diebenkorn retrospective and this show demonstrate that the museum is more than willing to be uncool. Along with such artists as John Marin and Marsden Hartley, Dove (1880-1946) was a staple of Alfred Stieglitz's vanguard Gallery 291. He may not have aged as well as his contemporaries, but he remains a crucial innovator—in some accounts, he competes with Kandinsky as the first abstractionist. His style of abstract landscape never dies: one might visit any number of downtown galleries and view pictures whose only advance over Dove's is that they now come cloaked in the rhetoric of the body, gender, sexuality, and so on. (See also Galleries—Uptown, Short List.) Through April 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Great Cities, Small Treasures: The Ancient World of the Indus Valley" marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Pakistan with artifacts and decorative art from the Indus civilization, which flourished in the region from 2600 to 1750 B.C. Through May 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. (744-8181)—"The Scent of Ink: The Roy and Marilyn Papp Collection of Chinese Painting" focusses on traditions of painting by comparing the work of master painters, primarily from the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, with *copies by succeeding generations of students.* Through June 20. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—"The Jewels of Lalique" collects the innovations of René Lalique (1860-1945), who brought the languorous lines of Art Nouveau to jewelry design and glassmaking. Through April 12. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—"Norman Norell (1900-1972)," a retrospective devoted to the "American Balenciaga," includes examples of his exquisitely cut ready-to-wear clothes as well as his elaborately sequinned "mermaid" dresses. Through April 18. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—"To Observe and Imagine: British Drawings and Watercolors, 1600-1900." A captivating exhibition that includes some hundred and forty examples of the two mediums, among them Francis Barlow's "Owl Defending Its Young from a Hawk" and his renderings for a book of Aesop's Fables; Richard Cosway's irresistible portrait of Horace Beckford as an adorable little dandy; J. M. W. Turner's gorgeously nuanced watercolor of Dunster Castle; and a small, lovely section devoted to early work by the precocious Edward Lear. Shows like this are intended for reading as much as for looking, leisurely and closely. Through May 3. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Gustave Courbet (1819-77)—Later paintings, most of them dazzling, willful seascapes and rich, voluptuous landscapes. Toward the end of his life, Courbet returned to the landscape of his youth, the Loue Valley in the Jura Mountains, and his superb paintings "Château d'Ornans" and "Gorge in the Jura" suggest the magical way place can capture a child's imagination and never give way. Through Feb. 28. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays.)

Jud Nelson—Trompe-l'œil sculptures of dog biscuits, Saltines, light bulbs, aspirins, etc., rendered in marble. Through Feb. 28. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345.)

"Points of Origin"—An exhibition comparing the work of three artists (Bruce Nauman, Roni Horn, and John Duff) with that of their mentors (Robert Arneson, Dale Chihuly, and Ron Nagle, respectively). Through Feb. 21. (Parrasch, 20 W. 57th St. 246-5360.)

"Rubber"—A beautiful group show of works involving the title substance, curated by Anne O'Sullivan, including pieces by such art-historical stalwarts as Bruce Nauman and Richard Serra and a number of more recent ones by younger artists. The postminimalist art of the sixties packs more punch than the contemporary stuff here, but then again art of the sixties usually does. Through Feb. 28. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454.)

Short List—**CAROL DIEHL,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through March 14. . . . **ARTHUR DOVE,** Dintenfass, 20 E. 79th St. 581-2268. Through Feb. 28. . . . **JANET FISH,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through March 7. . . . **LINDEN FREDERICK,** MB Modern, 41 E. 57th St. 371-3444. Through Feb. 28. . . . **MORRIS GRAVES,** Schmidt-Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through March 28. . . . **GEORGE GROSZ AND PHILIP EVERGOOD,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through Feb. 21. . . . **RALPH HUMPHREY,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Feb. 14. . . . **KAZUKO INOUE** and **JERRY MC LAUGHLIN,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Both shows through Feb. 28. . . . **DONALD JUDD,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through March 14. . . . **CRAIG MC PHERSON,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Feb. 28. . . . **WES**

MILLS, Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Feb. 21. . . . **DANIEL MORPER,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through Feb. 28. . . . **HARVEY QUAYTMAN,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951. Through March 14. . . . **LINDA SOKOLOWSKI,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 307-5730. Through March 7. . . . **HELEN TORR,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Through Feb. 21. . . . **MANOLO VALDES,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; through Feb. 28.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

MARK HANDFORTH / DARA FRIEDMAN—New work by two Miami-based artists. In the main gallery, Handforth has installed a large satellite dish, brushing the aluminum, perhaps to spruce it up. Friedman is showing two Super-8 films that manage to be modest and pretentious at the same time: "Total," in which she smashes up a hotel room, like some dissolute rocker; and "Jodie," which follows a model at a fashion shoot. Through Feb. 14. (Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Closed Tuesdays.)

HELEN MARDEN—Abstract paintings and works on paper. Marden, a contemporary of Ellen Phelan, Jennifer Bartlett, and Elizabeth Murray, has only recently come to the fore. Her work veers between the violence of broad, slashing strokes and lyrical delicacy; her colors suggest the East. The pale ghost of Henri Michaux seems to float in and out. Through Feb. 28. (Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

INGO MELLER—Abstract paintings by a German artist who uses broad swipes of the brush on raw canvas (although the effect could hardly be called spontaneous). The swaths of pigment are arrayed in roughly gridlike formations. It's hard to know whether these works are intended as sincere painterly expressions or ironic pastiches à la Gerhard Richter—or both. Through Feb. 28. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

GROUP SHOW—Works by Eugenio Dittborn, Willie Doherty, Mona Hatoum, and Doris Salcedo. Through Feb. 28. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474.)

SHORT LIST—**KEITH EDMIER,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through March 7. . . . **GRAHAM GILLMORE,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through March 14. . . . **GUY GOODWIN,** Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318. Through Feb. 28. . . . **ELLEN HARVEY AND JAROSLAW KOZAKIEWICZ,** De Folin, 529 W. 20th St. 242-3434. Through Feb. 14. . . . **ANNA RUTH HENRIQUES,** Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225. Through March 21. . . . **GARY HUME,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Feb. 28. . . . **JOAN JONAS,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366. Through Feb. 24. . . . **MARTIN G. LARRALDE,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Feb. 26. . . . **OMAR LOPEZ-CHAHOUD,** DeChiara/Stewart, 521 W. 26th St. 967-6007. Through Feb. 21. . . . **MATTHEW MC CASLIN,** Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Through March 7. . . . **PETER NEWMAN,** I-20 Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through Feb. 21. . . . **ROSS RUDEL,** Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through March 7. . . . **MARK DEAN VECA,** Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through Feb. 28. . . . **DAN WITZ,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through Feb. 21. . . . **BETTY WOODMAN,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Feb. 28.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JOHN BALDESSARI—"The Goya Series," recent ink-jet paintings and works on paper in which Baldessari juxtaposes fragments of laconic texts drawn from Goya's "Disasters of War" series with seemingly unrelated images; the results are very beautiful and echt Conceptual. This may not be the artist's most compelling show, but so-so Baldessari is still better than just about anything else on the block. Through Feb. 14. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

SQUEAK CARNWATH—Highly mannered, faux-naïve paintings with textured, varnished surfaces in muted tones, featuring various motifs (the globe, a leaf, a bug, a sea of handprints) that have been pressed into the service of the artist's musings on time, memory, sibling rivalry, cloning, and the span of a life. Accomplished, clever, and, ultimately, benign. Through Feb. 14. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863.)

IRENE HARDWICKE—A lovely, lovelorn, hymeneal show of oils on wood. The artist has covered the bodies of her pale and naked brides with magical botanical specimens and with folk wisdom and Biblical quotations in print so small that getting close enough to read them feels as intimate as kissing. Through Feb. 28. (Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820.)

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE—The South African artist's animated films, based on his vaguely expressionistic charcoal drawings, are a far cry from the superslick computer animation we've grown accustomed to. The work treats the intersection of individual despair and political crime, refracted through memory and dream; it will appeal to the "Whither humanism in art?" crowd. Through Feb. 14. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

ANSELM KIEFER—"Your Age and Mine and the Age of the World," four enormous new paintings of extraordinary beauty and poignancy, accompanied by three handmade books of photographs. The operatic heaviness that has sometimes marred Kiefer's output is wholly absent here. The title of the show suggests its contemplative tone; at the top of one eponymous painting, of a looming pyramid, are the words "für Ingeborg Bachmann," referring to the Austrian poet who once wrote, "It's not you I've lost, but the world." Through Feb. 28. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

"FOOD"—A hilariously straight-faced presentation from the Food archive: documents, photographs, practically prehistoric videos, even a chunk of wall, all relating to the coöperative SoHo restaurant founded by Caroline Goodden, Gordon Matta-Clark, Tina Girouard, et al., in 1971. There was an infectious let's-put-on-a-show anarchy to the artist-run enterprise and its spin-offs. Matta-Clark's grin as he stands next to Holly Solomon inside "Dumpster" (an open-air mockery of a dwelling, set up near the restaurant with a flock of umbrellas for a roof) brings back the neo-Bolshevik goofiness of SoHo's low-rent heyday. Through March 1. (White Columns, 154 Christopher St. 924-4212.)

"GROWING OBSESSION"—A selection of painstaking work by six artists: Ann Hamilton placed tiny pebbles on top of nearly every letter across a nine-page folio; Oliver Herring knitted an ashtray ("Reliquary") out of translucent Mylar; Bruce Connor painted and pleated his pages into a Rorschach-blot symmetry as complicated as stained glass in a Gothic cathedral. The works profit from their juxtaposition, which allows individual pieces to shed an idée-fixe drabness. Through Feb. 28. (Dorsky, 379 West Broadway. 966-6170.)

GROUP SHOW—Sculptures by Kiki Smith and Anne Chu and a painting by Byron Kim. Through Feb. 28. (AC Project Room, 15 Renwick St. 219-8275.)

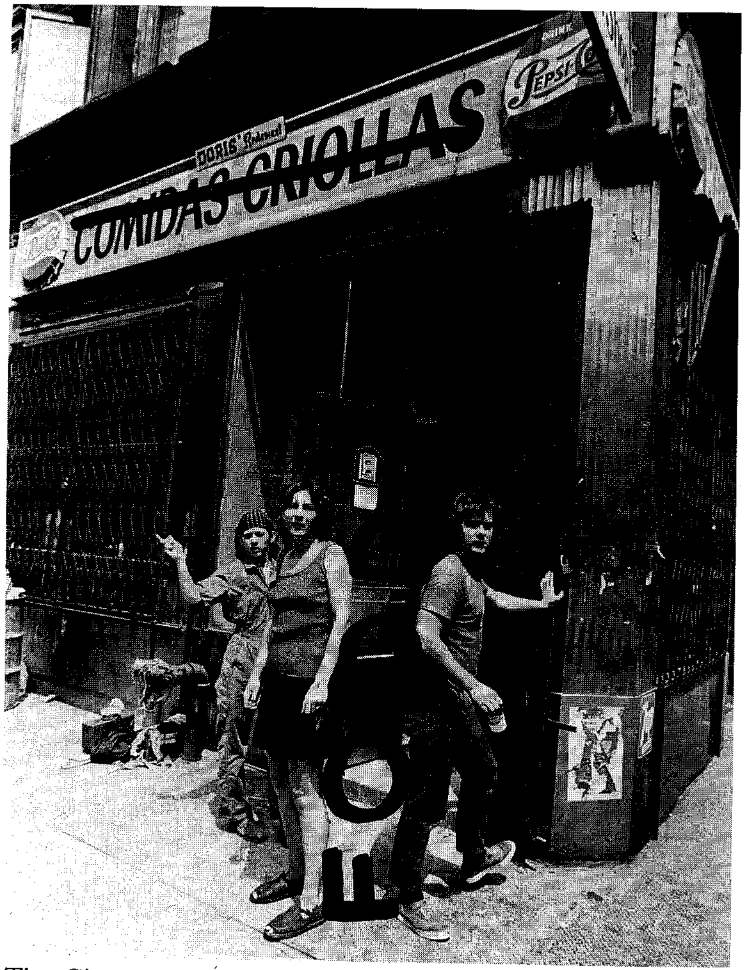
SHORT LIST—**SHEILA BERGER,** First New York: Staff Gallery, 495 Broadway. 925-9700. Through Feb. 28. . . . **MARIE JOSÉ BURKI,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through March 14. . . . **GEORGE CONDO,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through March 7. . . . **PETER DREHER,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through March 7. . . . **PAMELA FRASER,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Through Feb. 21. . . . **SANG NAM LEE,** Wimmer, 560 Broadway. 274-0274. Through March 7. . . . **MATT MULLICAN,** Alexander, 59 Wooster St. 925-4338. Through March 28.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S—Nineteenth-century European paintings, drawings, and sculptures. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. Feb. 12.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST:** Marine paintings and maritime memorabilia. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400. Feb. 17.)

SOTHEBY'S—This week the house is given over entirely to advance viewing of the effects of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, which will be auctioned in eighteen sessions, from Feb. 19 to Feb. 27. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

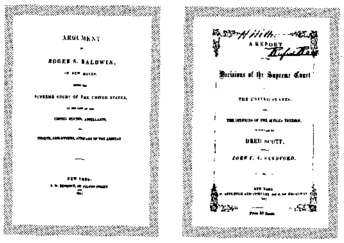
DOYLE—Nineteenth- and twentieth-century decorative art, mostly from the Belle Époque, including pieces by Gorham, Tiffany, and Jensen, among others (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Feb. 11.)



RICHARD LANDRY/COURTESY OF CAROLINE GOODDEN

Tina Girouard, Caroline Goodden, and Gordon Matta-Clark, in 1971, readying Food, their artist-run restaurant. (See Galleries—Downtown.)

AUCTIONS AT SWANN



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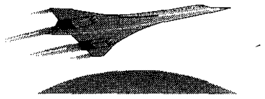

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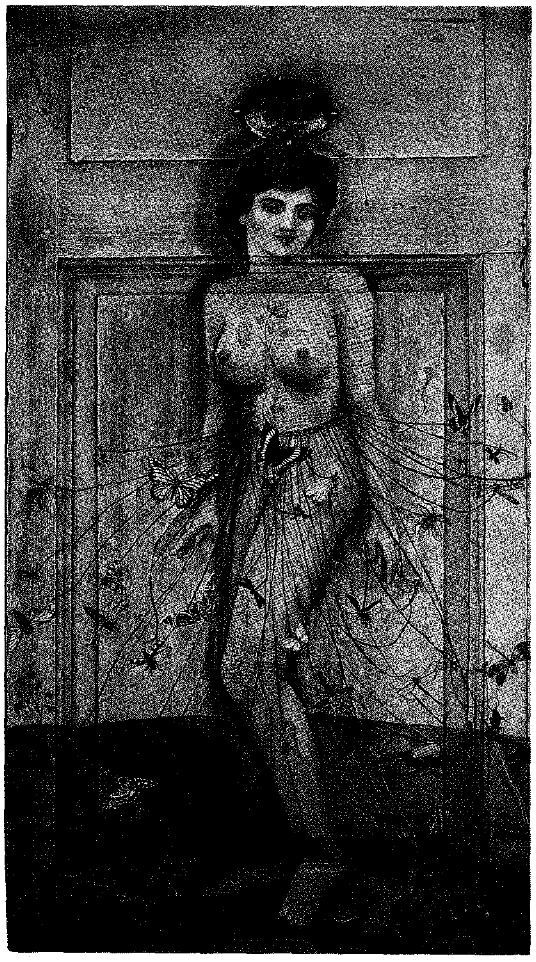
PHOTOGRAPHY

Harry Benson—"First Families: An Intimate Portrait from the Kennedys to the Clintons." Through Feb. 14. (Newseum, 580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. 317-7596. Open Mondays.)

Rose Marasco—"New England Diary," photographs of items the artist has collected over the years along the rural byways of the Northeast. Some form series, such as six images of the fronts and backs of homemade button cards, or a dozen shots of colorful aprons. Others depict domestic items—a rolling pin, an ironing board—out of doors at the edge of a marsh or of the ocean. The most affecting works recontextualize old photographs: one picture, of a woman named Florence Burrill Jacobs (whose diary the artist also found), is elegantly surrounded by a carpet of umber grape leaves, rhyming with the image of the young woman sitting in a doorway overgrown with grapevines. Through March 7. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., between 23rd and 24th Sts. 242-7767.)



"Wings Brushing Legs," by Irene Hardwicke (Bodell).

Richard Rothman—"Shrubs," a selection of two dozen photographs taken over a six-year period, which superbly illuminate our relationship with the often meagre landscape of New York City and its environs. Through Feb. 14. (Sorokko, 430 West Broadway. 941-8888.)

Arne Svenson / Penelope Umbrico—Highly seductive prints of prisoners, from the artist's collection of early-twentieth-century glass-plate mug shots. / New abstract work whose subject is mail-order catalogues. Both shows through Feb. 21. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

"The Cottingley Fairies and Other Apparitions"—The sprites the title alludes to were the creations of two young cousins, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, who, in 1917, in their West Yorkshire hamlet, produced two photographs, each of a winged being prancing beside a young girl. (The cousins happily confessed to their hoax in 1982.) In addition, the show presents "spirit" photographs from the nineteenth century and works by a great lineup of artists, including Eugène Atget, Jacques Henri Lartigue, James Van Der Zee, Duane Michals, Vik Muniz, and Nancy Burson. Through Feb. 21. (Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450.)

"Flashback: The Fifties"—A pictorial survey of that decade, through the works of such photographers as Roy DeCarava, Robert Frank, Benn Mitchell, and Garry Winogrand. Through March 7. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"Italy: Four Artists, Three Journeys"—Recent work by Angelo Lomeo, Sonja Bullaty, Linda Butler, and Leonard Sussman. Through March 14. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510.)

"Male"—A show of ruminations on the masculine in photographs and other mediums, curated by *Village Voice* photography critic and art editor Vince Aletti. Among the artists represented are Wilhelm von Gloeden, Cecil Beaton, Jean Cocteau, Sally Mann, John Dugdale, Rosalind Solomon, Tseng Kwong Chi, and David Wojnarowicz. Through Feb. 22. (Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Open Sundays.)

"The Photography Show 98"—Eighty dealers exhibit their best historical and contemporary prints at this whirlwind weekend affair. (New York Hilton, Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. Feb. 13-14, from noon to 8, and Feb. 15, from 11 to 6. For information, call 202-986-0105.)

"Portraits"—The inaugural exhibition of the Paul Morris gallery features works by Robert Beck, Eve Fowler, Seydou Keïta, Tracey Moffatt, Jack Pierson, Chris Verne, and Andy Warhol. Through Feb. 28. (465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Closed Tuesdays.)

"With and Without Gravity"—A show of all the pictures in the new issue (No. 10) of the journal *Blind Spot.* Among the artists are Gregory Crewdson, Martin Parr, Lou Reed, Richard Misrach, and Marilyn Bridges. Through Feb. 17. (SoHo Triad Fine Arts, 107 Grand St. 965-9500. Open daily.)

International Center of Photography—"Nelly: From Athens to New York, the Work of Elli Seraïdari." . . . ¶ "Images from the Machine Age: Selections from the Daniel Cowin Collection." Both shows through Feb. 22. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through March 8. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**ANTON BRUEHL,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through March 7. . . . **TONI FRISSELL,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through Feb. 21. . . . **JAN GROOVER,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Feb. 21. . . . **LOIS GUARINO,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through March 14. . . . **YEVGENY KHALDEI,** Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363. Through Feb. 21. . . . **DOROTHEA LANGE** and **LEWIS HINE,** Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays; both shows through Feb. 28. . . . **WAYNE F. MILLER,** De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through March 14. . . . **ROBERTO SCHEZEN,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through March 14. . . . **DAVID (CHIM) SEYMOUR,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through March 7. . . . **RUTH THORNE-THOMSEN** and **ROBERT FRANK,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Both shows through Feb. 21. . . . **BURK UZZLE** and **MICHA BAR-AM,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; both shows through March 14. . . . **ERNEST WITHERS,** Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Closed Tuesdays, opens at noon; through March 7.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**les contes d'hoffmann,** with Natalie Dessay, Patricia Racette, Jennifer Larmore, Susanne Mentzer, Richard Leech, and James Morris; conducted by Simone Young. (Feb. 11 at 8.) . . . With Victoria Livengood instead of Ms. Larmore. (Feb. 14 at 8.) . . . **die zauberflöte,** with Heidi Grant Murphy, Elizabeth Carter, Frank Lopardo, Gerald Finley, John Cheek, and Franz Hawlata; Edo de Waart. (Feb. 12 at 7:30.) . . . **samson et dalila,** in the opening performances of a new production, with Denyce Graves, Plácido Domingo, and Sergei Leiferkus; Leonard Slatkin. (Feb. 13 at 7:30 and Feb. 16 at 8.) . . . **il trovatore,** with June Anderson, Dolora Zajick, Richard Margison, and Juan Pons; Ms. Young. (Feb. 14 at 1:30 and Feb. 17 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur directs Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," with the choral singing provided by the Thomanerchor (the Choir of St. Thomas Church, Leipzig), which the composer oversaw from 1723 until his death in 1750. Tenor John Aler (as the Evangelist) and baritone Matthias Goerne (as Christ) head the roster of soloists, which also includes soprano Sylvia McNair, mezzo-soprano Annette Markert, tenor Stanford Olsen, and baritone Olaf Bär. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Feb. 12-14 and Feb. 17, all at 7.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost leads Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F (with the composer's nephew Leopold Godowsky III as soloist), Copland's Symphony for Organ and Orchestra (with organist Dorothy Papadakos), Strauss's Symphonic Interlude (from "Intermezzo"), and Elgar's orchestral transcription of Bach's C-Minor Fantasia and Fugue. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 12 at 7:30.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp leads music cited in the Aubrey-Maturin novels of Patrick O'Brian: Clementi's Symphony No. 3 in G Major (Op. 18), Mozart's Oboe Quartet, and Haydn's "Nelson" Mass (with the Amor Artis Chorale). Commodore John Burton-Hall, the recently retired captain of the Queen Elizabeth II, reads relevant passages from the books. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 14 at 7.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Schumann's Piano Concerto (with Vladimir Feltsman), Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances" (Suite No. 1), Glazunov's Serenade, and Martinů's Concerto for Piano, Timpani, and Two String Orchestras. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 14 at 8 and Feb. 15 at 5.)

New York Youth Symphony—Promising performers of the up-and-coming generation play Brahms's "Academic Festival Overture," a new work by Kevin Beavers, Mozart's A-Major Violin Concerto (with violinist Amy Schwartz), and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite. Mischa Santora conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 15 at 2.)

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra—Riccardo Chailly conducts Amsterdam's leading orchestra in three separate programs at Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 15 at 3: Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Arcadi Volodos) and Stravinsky's "Petrouchka." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 7:30: Berg's Violin Concerto (with violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann) and Mahler's Symphony No. 5. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 8: The Royal Concertgebouw takes special pride in its long-standing association with Mahler: founded in 1888, just when Mahler was coming to the fore as a composer, it quickly became an important forum for his symphonies. This concert opens with a rare performance of "Todtenfeier" ("Funeral Rite"), which Mahler wrote in the summer of 1888 as a tone poem and revised five years later as the opening movement of his Second Symphony. When he first played "Todtenfeier" on the piano for his conducting colleague Hans von Bülow, the latter listened the whole way through with his hands over his ears. At the end, he rendered a frigid assessment: "If that's music, then I don't understand a thing about music." When von Bülow died, in 1894, Mahler got his revenge by playing his "Funeral Rite" in memoriam—though he tactfully invited only one friend to share in his ghoulish last laugh. The bulk of the program is given over to Rossini's Stabat Mater, with soprano Barbara Frittoli, mezzo-soprano Sonia Ganassi, tenor Stuart Neill, and bass Michele Pertusi. (875-5030.)

Minnesota Orchestra—The Prelude to Act III of Wagner's "Lohengrin," arias by Verdi and Rossini (with soprano Kathleen Battle), Argento's "Reverie, Reflections on a Hymn Tune," and Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben," conducted by Eiji Oue. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard leads Beethoven's Symphony No. 8, Dargomizhsky's "Cossack Dance," and Anton Rubinstein's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Matti Raekallio). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Feb. 16 at 2 and 7 and Feb. 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Pittsburgh Symphony—Mariss Jansons conducts Corigliano's "Fantasia on an Ostinato," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Radu Lupu), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 17 at 8.)

RECITALS

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Pianist Sarah Rothenberg assists the instrumentalists in works by George Tsontakis, Eleanor Cory (a première), William Mayer, and John Deak. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Feb. 11 at 7. For information about tickets, call 840-7470.)

THINKING SCIENCE

All over the world, the need to learn the language of science grows more urgent every day. Only a basic grasp of mathematical and scientific thinking equips us to evaluate the impact of new technologies, therapies, and public policies on issues ranging from AIDS, health care and the economy to drugs, the environment, defense and interplanetary space exploration. Scientific literacy has become a critical decision-making tool. ❦ The Weizmann Institute of Science tackles the challenge with zest. ❦ At Israel's foremost research center, top scientists take time to develop new programs for youngsters through high school. The Science Teaching Department trains teachers, publishes journals and devises games, kits and computer materials. Textbooks appear in Hebrew and Arabic. Other youth activities include math-by-mail exchanges, a national math olympiad, science-and-music sessions, and campus visits for demonstrations and workshops in the Youth Village and Garden of Science. Gifted students from the U.S. and many other foreign countries vie for places in the exciting annual pre-college International Summer Science Program at the Weizmann Institute. ❦ Fostering scientific literacy responds to universal objectives. It deserves support everywhere.

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Joel Frederiksen—The lutenist and bass singer presents English love songs by Elizabethan composers. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 378-0248. Feb. 11 at 7:30.)

Speculum Musicae—The contemporary-music group offers premières of works by Wayne Peterson, David Sanford, and Peter Susser, as well as Penderecki's "Cadenza" (with violist Christiane Edinger). (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Feb. 11 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Feb. 12 at 7:30 and Feb. 15 at 4: Violist Toby Hoffman and pianist Jerome Lowenthal perform sonatas by Mendelssohn, Hindemith, and Shostakovich; Mr. Lowenthal also offers four impromptus by Chopin. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 6:30: A candlelit dinner-concert for Valentine's Day, which includes performances of Ravel's String Quartet and Wolf's "Italian Serenade." (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

Joel Krosnick and Gilbert Kalish—The cellist and the pianist perform the première of Ralph Shapey's "Sonata Appassionata," as well as Brahms's F-Major Cello Sonata, Ernst Bacon's "A Life," and Webern's "Two Pieces" and "Three Little Pieces" (Op. 11). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Chamber Players of the League/I.S.C.M.—Performing works by Bruce Saylor, David Dzubay, Mario Davidovsky, and Tamar Diesendruck. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Clarion Music Society—Members of the early-music ensemble—Judson Griffin and Leah Nelson (violin), Myron Lutzke (cello), Richard Stone (theorbo), and Frederick Hammond (keyboards)—perform trio sonatas by Purcell and by seventeenth-century Italian and English masters who inspired him. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Feb. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 772-4448.)

Yigal Kesselman—Pianist, in works by Rachmaninoff, Schubert, and Scriabin. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Feb. 15 at noon.) . . . ¶ Prokofiev's Sonata No. 6, plus pieces by Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 15 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Gil Shaham—Violinist, with pianist Akira Eguchi, performing works by Schubert, Fauré, Prokofiev, and others. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Feb. 15 at 2.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra, plus guests, perform instrumental and vocal chamber works by Rorem ("Santa Fe Songs" and "Serenade on Five English Poems"), Druckman ("Dark Upon the Harp"), and Harbison ("Mirabai Songs"). (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 15 at 3.)

North/South Consonance—The ensemble presents works by two composers celebrating round-number birthdays this season— Roque Cordero (attaining his eightieth) and Aurelio de la Vega (turning seventy)—in addition to pieces by Tania León, Rafael González, Martin Kutnowski, Max Lifchitz, Ricardo Tacuchian, and Silvestre Revueltas. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 15 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

New York Camerata—The chamber group performs piano trios by Haydn (in E Minor) and Arensky (in D Minor), duets by Martinů and Harbison, and Ursula Mamlok's "Music for Stony Brook." (St. John's In-the-Village, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. Feb. 15 at 4. For information about tickets, call 866-3459.)

Ambrosia Trio—What are the chances of the Arensky D-Minor Piano Trio's receiving two simultaneous performances in town? Like the New York Camerata, the Ambrosians link it to a Haydn trio (the "Gypsy," in G Major, this time), and round out the program with Shostakovich's Trio No. 2. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Feb. 15 at 4. Tickets at the door.)

Martin Jean—Organist, performing Bach's Trio No. 6 and Prelude and Fugue in E Minor (the "Wedge"), Schumann's "Preludes and Fugues on the Initials B-A-C-H," and Milos Sokola's "Passacaglia Quasi Toccata on the Theme B-A-C-H." (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Feb. 16 at 8. . . . **note:** This recital concludes a daylong convocation of the American Guild of Organists' New York City Chapter; for information about affiliated organ tours and lecture-recitals, call 289-4100.)

Cosmopolitan Chamber Players—In this concert, Lowell Liebermann (whose Piano Concerto No. 2 is in the running for a Grammy as Best Classical Contemporary Composition) unveils his "Six Songs on Poems by Henry W. Longfellow," in which he will serve as piano accompanist for tenor Robert White. Also on the roster are Liebermann's Violin Sonata, duets for two violins by Leclair and Spohr, and Beethoven's Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major (Op. 16a, arranged by the composer from his Piano-and-Winds Quintet). The string playing falls to violinists Eric Grossman and Xiao-Dong Wang and cellist Roger Low. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 17 at 8.)

Les Talens Lyriques—The harpsichordist and conductor Christophe Rousset leads this distinguished period-instrument ensemble, with sopranos Véronique Gens and Sandrine Piau. Feb. 17 at 8: French Baroque sacred music, including François Couperin's three "Leçons de Ténèbres," as well as four motets by Daniel Danielis, a Netherlandish composer who, having failed to secure employment at the court of Louis XIV, ended his career as music director at the cathedral in Vannes. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. For information about tickets, call 800-627-0665.) . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 8: Secular sonatas and cantatas Handel wrote during his years as a fledgling composer in Rome, including "Aminta e Fillide." (Alice Tully Hall.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Garden Parties—The Harlem Globetrotters have been playing basketball since 1927, racking up a record, at press time, of 19,709–332. The last time they were beaten was in the summer of '95, and that was by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's Legendary All Stars. On Feb. 15 at 1, Curley (Boo) Johnson, Michael (Wild Thing) Wilson, the Bronx's own Orlando (Hurricane) Antigua, and the rest of the magicians of basketball face a less threatening but equally worthy opponent, the New York Nationals. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741.) . . . ¶ Starting the following day, hundreds of dachshunds, pointers, mastiffs, terriers, and other canines face off, as the hundred-and-twenty-second annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show takes over the arena. (Feb. 16-17. 800-455-3647.)

Readings—Feb. 11 at 6:30: By Cherry Jones, Lillo Way, and other actors, from the love stories of Amy Bloom, Katherine Heiny, Isabel Allende, and Anton Chekhov. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 6:30: By former *Times Book Review* editor Mel Watkins, from his memoir, "Dancing with Strangers." (Rizzoli, 454 West Broadway. No tickets necessary.)

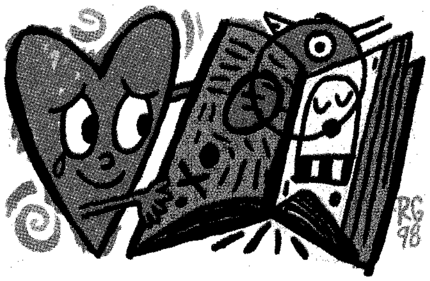
Talks—Feb. 11 at 5:30: Writer Daphne Merkin, who in 1996 wrote a Personal History piece in these pages about spanking, gives a lecture titled "The Embarrassment of Disclosure: What Happens After You Spill the Beans?" (Sulzberger Parlor, Barnard Hall, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 8:15: Robert Storr, a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, interviews artist Matthew Barney. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Walks—Feb. 14 at 11 and 2: Urban Park Rangers tell what the birds and the bees are up to, on Valentine's Day tours of Prospect Park, in Brooklyn, Riverside Park, in Manhattan, Kissena Park, in Queens, and High Rock Park, in Staten Island. For more information, call 360-2774.

BOOK CURRENTS

Shelf Love

A cigarette that bears a lipstick's traces, an airline ticket to romantic places: sometimes it's the foolish things that speak most eloquently about love. David Bowman—whose new novel, **Bunny Modern** (Little, Brown), is a prickly romantic comedy set in a future without electricity—says that, for him, "any collection of Krazy Kat cartoons" (such as **Krazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman**, published by Abrams) amounts to a classic love story. "Krazy Kat is in love with Ignatz Mouse, who's throwing bricks at her head—what else can you say about unrequited love?"



Real-world love often entails loose ends and unfinished business. **The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western** (Macmillan), by F. Scott Fitzgerald, is "a story about Hollywood, and then the love story takes over," Bowman says. "But then the author dies halfway through the writing of the book. That it's a half-finished love story makes it seem precious and vulnerable, because you don't know how it ends." He also likes noir fiction, and Raymond Chandler's **The Long Goodbye** (Random House) is a particular favorite: "It's really a love story about unconsummated love between Philip Marlowe and Terry Lennox." Bowman calls Jonathan Lethem's **As She Climbed Across the Table** (Doubleday) one of the most brilliant love stories of the past twenty-five years: "Guy meets girl, guy loses girl to the black hole, and gets girl back when she crawls out of the black hole." The woman in Lethem's novel is a physicist, and the black hole in question isn't a figure of speech. By the same token, "We're not dealing with metaphorical love here," Bowman says. "It's the real thing."

But when it comes to writing specifically about love, Bowman feels the French have the market sewn up. He recounts an instance when he and his wife were driving to the beach, making their way through traffic, listening to some stories by Colette on the radio. "I don't even know what the stories were," he says. "But they just seemed so light and wise and Continental. . . . It was the most romantic combination of literature and life."

RODNEY ALAN GREENBLATT

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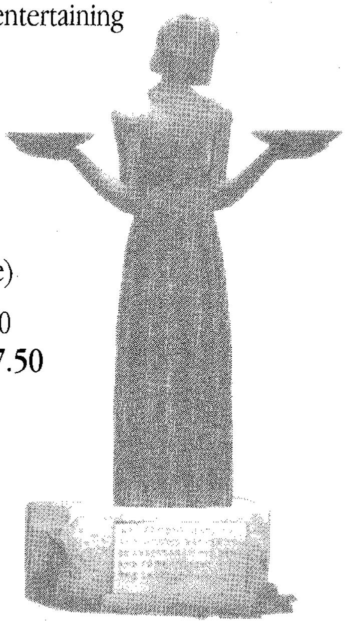

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THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life—A documentary by Michael Paxton. Opening Feb. 13. (Quad Cinema.)

The Borrowers—Peter Hewitt's comedy-adventure (based on the novels by Mary Norton) about the friendship between a boy and the tiny beings who inhabit his house. With John Goodman. Opening Feb. 13. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Village East Cinemas.)

Hurricane Streets—A drama by first-time writer-director Morgan J. Freeman, centering on a troubled teen-ager in New York's East Village. Opening Feb. 13.

Sphere—The discovery of a mysterious craft at the bottom of the ocean is the taking-off point for a science-fiction thriller directed by Barry Levinson. Adapted from the Michael Crichton novel. With Dustin Hoffman, Sharon Stone, and Samuel L. Jackson. Opening Feb. 13. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Wedding Singer—Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore star in a romantic comedy about a jilted singer and a hapless waitress. Directed by Frank Coraci. Opening Feb. 13.

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

The Apostle—Produced, written, and directed by its star, Robert Duvall, this film addresses without condescension or glibness a subject—religious conviction—that Hollywood generally caricatures. Duvall plays Sonny, a charismatic Pentecostal preacher who dresses in white three-piece suits and has so antagonized his wife (Farrah Fawcett) with his philandering that she's taken up with a younger minister and wrested control of his church. After bashing his rival with a baseball bat, Sonny leaves Texas and shows up in Bayou Boutte, Louisiana, where he rebuilds a church and infuses his mostly black congregants with spiritual ardor before his past catches up with him. Duvall's performance is so passionate, so energized, that it's almost eerie: is Sonny acting him or is he acting Sonny? The supporting players include John Beasley, June Carter Cash, Miranda Richardson, and Billy Bob Thornton.—*Daphne Merkin* (2/2/98) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

As Good as It Gets—A romantic comedy directed and co-written (with Mark Andrus) by James L. Brooks, in which an improbable trio overcomes a heap of troubles and finds collective happiness, sitcom style. Jack Nicholson stars as a romance novelist with a seriously alienating manner, Helen Hunt is a waitress with a young son who has a life-threatening disease, and Greg Kinnear is a gay painter with a sweet smile and no visible erotic attachments. You keep expecting to hear a laugh track.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Big Clock (1948)—In Kenneth Fearing's nitro-packed novel, the editor of a true-crime magazine must pretend to crack a murder case in which all the evidence points to himself; the real killer (he knows) is his publishing-tycoon boss. The director, John Farrow, and the screenwriter, Jonathan Latimer, bring the book tensely and vividly to life with deft casting (Ray Milland as the editor, Charles Laughton as the publisher), memorable symbols (like a lethal sundial), and acute observation. They capture a cushy level of the rat race in such bits as (to quote from James Agee's review) "an editorial conference, caught the split second before an hour's boring tension relaxes, with adjournment." Elsa Lanchester steals scenes as a neglected artist; George Macready nearly steals the movie as Laughton's flinty right-hand man.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum 2; Feb. 11-12.)

The Boxer—Daniel Day-Lewis plays a former I.R.A. recruit who returns to Belfast after fourteen years in prison and rebuilds a community boxing club in the hope of uniting Protestants and Catholics; along the way he takes up with a youthful flame (Emily Watson) now married to his best friend. Jim Sheridan's film is stronger on atmosphere than on specifics, but the quiet intensity of Day-Lewis's performance gives it genuine force.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Waverly.)

Deconstructing Harry—Woody Allen casts himself as a famous Jewish novelist who ridicules and cheats on women and then appropriates their life stories for his fiction. As a director, Allen seems to be shooting for a new style of ruthless honesty: the film's tone is almost abusively dark. But clear away the pseudoprofound talk about the immorality of genius and all you're left with is a bunch of celebrity cameos and outdated gags.—*Sarah Kerr* (Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 85th Street, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Desperate Measures—An exquisitely paced bore from Barbet Schroeder, concerning a cop (Andy Garcia) whose son needs a bone-marrow transplant from a convicted psycho killer (Michael Keaton). Schroeder, quite rightly, plays the whole setup economically, with Keaton trashing the hospital and making his escape in swift, well-edited bursts. But the script (by David Klass) is uninspired, and the acting, by both Garcia and Keaton, is too underplayed to be of much interest.—*Bruce Diones* (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Fallen—Apocalyptic fluff starring Denzel Washington as a cop who has sent a killer to the electric chair; it turns out that the killer was inhabited by a vengeful fallen angel whose spirit moves from person to person. Nicholas Kazan's script doesn't carry the conceit far enough: everything about the film is too cautious—including Washington, who does his usual turn as a sober and moral man, when what you want is to see him deeply rattled. Directed by Gregory Hoblit.—*S.K.* (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Four Days in September—In 1969, a group of young Brazilian terrorists kidnapped the American ambassador, demanding the release of imprisoned colleagues. Bruno Barreto's surprisingly placid movie remains faithful to the facts, but this fidelity brings problems. When a dreamy Marxist utters a line as corny as "The time is ripe for revolution," is that a period detail or a flaw in the script? Barreto's pacing, right up to the mild climax, is more assured than his grasp of character. The problem is that everyone seems to engage not only his interest but also his sympathy: Fernando (Pedro Cardoso), the kidnapper on whose memoir the movie was based, is nagged by doubt, and even the secret-service agent who specializes in torture is unable to sleep at night. At the time, Brazil was a military state plagued by subversion—so where are the hard men? The best reason to see the picture is Alan Arkin, who plays the ambassador; this role, too, is softly written, but Arkin redeems it with a clipped and dignified rigor.—*Anthony Lane* (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Free Soul (1931)—This wheezing melodrama was a sensational success. Adela Rogers St. John, the daughter of a lawyer, wrote the story about a brilliant alcoholic lawyer (Lionel Barrymore) whose independent, "free" daughter (Norma Shearer) had a hot affair with a man whom her father had got acquitted on a murder charge—a racketeer known as Ace (Clark Gable). Shearer's acting is dreadful, but she was in her bold-indiscreet-modern-woman period and looks sexily undressed in her silky Adrian gowns. Gable had erotic menace in his villainous role, and he gives the picture its only charge. (This was the performance that made him a star.) Barrymore hams fearfully (he got an Academy Award for it); Leslie Howard has the role of Shearer's high-minded former fiancé. Clarence Brown directed.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 13 and Feb. 15.)

The Gingerbread Man—A noirish thriller that depends a lot on inclement weather and devices from other noirish thrillers. Directed by Robert Altman, from an original story by John Grisham, the movie shrouds its conventional plot with some wonderful Altmanesque ambience and, as a result, has the feel of being about more than itself. Set in Savannah, it features Kenneth Branagh as a savvy, divorced attorney who picks up the wrong woman (Embeth Davidtz) one rainy night and is so taken by her apparent vulnerability—she portrays herself as the victim of a deranged cultist father (Robert Duvall)—that he sets about destroying his own life in order to protect hers. Altman's celebrated skill at allowing his actors room gives the picture a loopy, uncontrived flow that is rare for this genre. With Robert Downey, Jr., as an alcoholic private investigator.—*D.M.* (2/2/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Good Will Hunting—Matt Damon plays a belligerent working-class genius from South Boston who's been abused in foster homes and is now being given a chance to triumph over his past; Robin Williams is the maverick shrink who helps him understand his demons, and Minnie Driver is the unsnobbish Harvard girlfriend who tries to heal him with acceptance. If it sounds treacly, it's not, thanks to a honed script (co-written by Damon and Ben Affleck, who plays Damon's best pal), subtle performances, and surprisingly warm direction by Gus Van Sant.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and State.)

Kundun—Martin Scorsese's examination of the early life of the Dalai Lama. The film is far too long, and viewers may be frustrated by its frequently shifting tone; yet, in a way, a shifting tone is just the right treatment for a religion that emphasizes serene detachment over emotion. And, visually, this may be the director's richest feast since "Raging Bull."—*S.K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Guild, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

Live Flesh—Half an hour into Pedro Almodóvar's new film and you're already up to your chin in blood and lust. The farce is played, as usual, with impassioned gravity, yet somehow bereft of the high spirits that used to grace the director's films. With Liberto Rabal, Francesca Neri, and Javier Bardem. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (1/26/98) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Matilda (1996)—Danny DeVito has taken Roald Dahl's children's book as the basis for a wicked movie that may make parents squirm but should delight kids. Mara Wilson plays a precocious little girl who irritates her parents (DeVito and Rhea Perlman, both hilarious) because she'd rather read than watch TV. When they finally let her go to school, she meets her nemesis, Miss Trunchbull (Pam Ferris), a monstrous principal who shot-puts children out of windows. DeVito's punchy, throw-that-camera-across-the-room style of moviemaking is just right for this flamboyant, sloppy story, which subverts the usual Disney conventions and lets anarchy win the day.—*B.D.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 14-15.)

Nil by Mouth—Gary Oldman has started to coast through his acting roles, but writing and directing (this is his début feature) bring out the best in him. The story, set in South London, could not be simpler: Ray (Ray Winstone) is sliding into a swamp of drink and drugs, becoming a danger to his wife (Kathy Burke), to her dull brother (Charlie Creed-Miles), and to the rest of the clan. The nervous camera follows them all on a downward spiral; the brother's heroin addiction and Ray's bestial spasms of violence are hard to watch, but the film hangs around in your brain. Even the foul rush of the dialogue feels charged with aggression and wit. Oldman, who grew up in a world like this, is hell-bent on showing us what he knows. Burke and Winstone give it everything they've got, and it's a formidable sight.—*A.L.* (2/9/98) (Angelika Film Center.)

Oscar and Lucinda—The title of Gillian Armstrong's politely beautiful version of the Peter Carey novel refers to a pair of eccentric Victorians, the saintly Oscar (Ralph Fiennes) and the wealthy Lucinda (Cate Blanchett), who share vivid red hair and a weakness for gambling but never a bed. The theme of narrowly avoided love may have a certain delicacy on the page, but it leaves the film looking aimless; the movie may be lovely, but it doesn't play to Armstrong's strengths.—*A.L.* (1/12/98) (62nd & Broadway, 72nd Street East, and Waverly.)

The Replacement Killers—If Jackie Chan is the goofy Everyman of Hong Kong action movies, Chow Yun-Fat is the feline heartthrob—a Clint Eastwood-type avenger with the flair of a Cary Grant. In his American début, Chow plays a hit man assigned by a Chinese godfather to kill an American cop's little boy. He's reluctant to harm a child, so, with the help of a tough-with-a-heart-of-gold faker of passports (Mira Sorvino, wearing little more than lingerie), he goes on the lam. Chow is one of the most photogenic men on earth, and the director, Antoine Fuqua, works hard to match the operatic doominess of his Hong Kong vehicles. But in the more anonymous American setting, and without the mad conviction of a director like John Woo, all the choreographed murder feels dull, poorly paced, and, come to think of it, pretty demented.—*S.K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

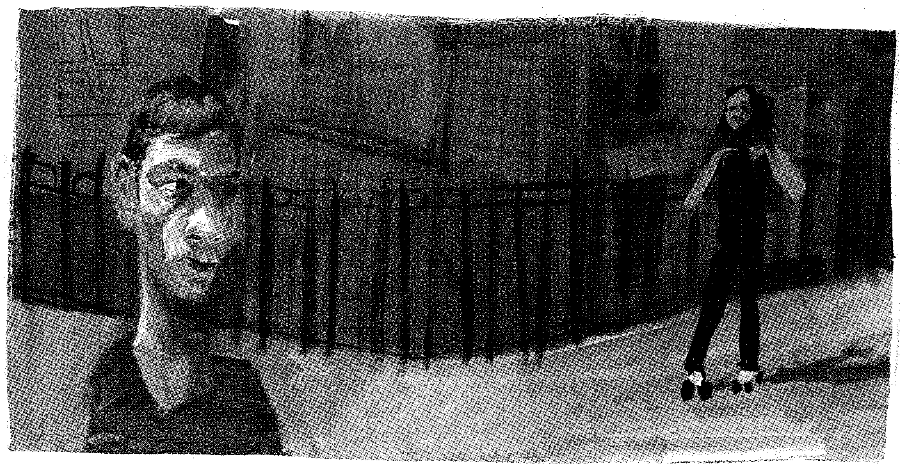
A Self-Made Hero (1997)—The story of a young Frenchman (Mathieu Kassovitz) who, having made a negligible contribution to the Second World War, invents a heroic past for himself; in the practice of deceit he displays so much wit and initiative and even courage, of a kind, that no one dares question his claim that he worked for the Resistance. Kassovitz is a sweet blank—the ideal nobody who wants to be something more. The director, Jacques Audiard, presents the tale as a cunning, silvery comedy, spliced with mock interviews and surreal montages. At the same time, he hints at more solemn themes, suggesting that collaboration with untruth is, if anything, an even more imponderable matter than collaboration with the enemy. In French.—*A.L.* (Florence Gould Hall; Feb. 17.)

Spice World—Opinions vary as to precisely how long it took to devise the plot of the showcase for the Space Girls; generous estimates put it at fifteen minutes. There are innumerable meetings with celebrities, few of whom will be recognized by American audiences. The director is Bob Spiers, though it's hard to judge whether he actually turned up on the set.—*A.L.* (1/26/98) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher) and her brute of a fiancé (Billy Zane). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian; this all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

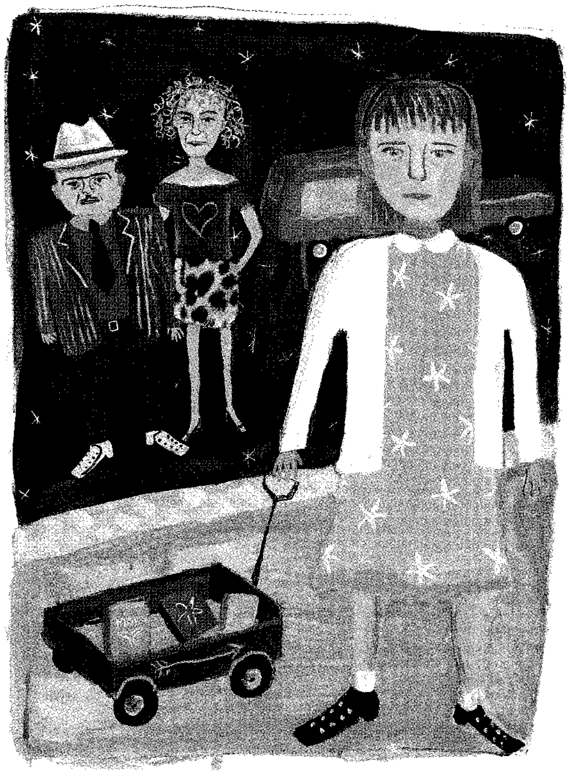
Wag the Dog—Barry Levinson's comedy about the politics of spin control, from a screenplay by David Mamet and Hilary Henkin. The premise involves a Presidential incumbent caught in a sex scandal less than two weeks before Election Day. Robert De Niro plays a Machiavellian spinmeister who devises a fake war and hires a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to orchestrate it. The movie is very clever, but its tone of gleeful sendup never takes you beyond what you already know.—*D.M.* (1/5/98) (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Zero Effect—Bill Pullman, exploring the madness beneath his usual screen persona of excruciating decency, plays a brilliant, agoraphobic detective; Ben Stiller is his more normal assistant; and Ryan O'Neal is their client, a preppy tycoon looking for a set of lost keys. Jake Kasdan's first film has a dark, cartoonish tone and a few clever moments, but ultimately it feels both overwritten and insufficiently thought through. The most glaring zero of all is Pullman and Stil-



Opening Feb. 13, Brendan Sexton III and Isidra Vega in "Hurricane Streets."

GREG CHRISTIE



At the Walter Reade Theatre, Danny DeVito, Rhea Perlman, and Mara Wilson in "Matilda."

SUSAN SAAS

ler's chemistry: their scenes together are slow and jerky, like a tennis game between two players who can't get the ball over the net.—*S. K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

AFTERGLOW *(reviewed in our issue of 1/19/98)*: Regency.... **AMISTAD:** Lincoln Square and State.... **BLUES BROTHERS 2000:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.... **BOOGIE NIGHTS** (10/13/97): Eastside Playhouse.... **DECEIVER:** Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea West, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.... **DEEP RISING:** 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Cinemas, Embassy 1, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.... **DEVIL'S ADVOCATE:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **EVE'S BAYOU:** Worldwide Cinemas .... **FALLEN ANGELS:** Film Forum.... **GREAT EXPECTATIONS:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld.... **HALF BAKED:** Criterion Center, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.... **HARD RAIN:** 84th Street Sixplex and 34th Street Showplace.... **THE HOUSE OF YES:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **THE JACKAL:** Worldwide Cinemas.... **JACKIE BROWN** (1/12/98): Embassy 3, Metro Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.... **KILLING TIME:** 86th Street East Twin.... **L.A. CONFIDENTIAL** (9/22/97): Art Greenwich Twin and New York Twin.... **MA VIE EN ROSE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.... **MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL** (12/6/97): Worldwide Cinemas.... **MOTHER AND SON:** Film Forum.... **MOUSEHUNT:** 64th and 2nd.... **THE NEXT STEP:** Village East Cinemas.... **NO ORDINARY LOVE:** Village East Cinemas.... **PAUL MONETTE: THE BRINK OF SUMMER'S END:** Quad Cinema.... **PHANTOMS:** Chelsea Cinema, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, and Village East Cinemas.... **RATCHET:** Village East Cinemas.... **SCREAM 2:** State.... **STEPHEN KING'S THE NIGHT FLIER:** Embassy 2 and Sutton.... **THE SWEET HEREAFTER** (11/24/97): Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.... **SWEPT FROM THE SEA:** 64th and 2nd and Village East Cinemas.... **TOMORROW NEVER DIES:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, and Metro Cinema.... **VILLAGE OF DREAMS:** Cinema Village.... **THE WINGS OF THE DOVE** (11/10/97): 59th Street East Cinema.... **THE WINTER GUEST** (1/5/98): Paris.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Feb. 11-12: "The Big Clock" (†) and "Criss Cross" (1949, Robert Siodmak).... From Feb. 13 (except Feb. 16): "Shock Corridor" (1963, Samuel Fuller).... Feb. 16: "The Girl Said No" (1930, Sam Wood) and "The Smart Set" (1928, Jack Conway), both with William Haines.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Feb. 12 at 2:30 and Feb. 14 at 2: "The Single Standard" (1929, John S. Robertson).... Feb. 12 at 6: Short films by Ken Jacobs, one program in a series about the history of 8-mm. films and videos in the United States.... Feb. 12 at 6:30 and Feb. 13 at 3: "Who's Gonna Take the Weight" (1997, Alonzo Speight).... Feb. 13 at 2:30 and Feb. 15 at 5: "A Free Soul" (†).... Feb. 13 at 6 and Feb. 17 at 2:30: "Emma" (1932, Clarence Brown).... Feb. 13 at 7: "L'Inhumaine" (1923, Marcel L'Herbier; a French silent film).... Feb. 13 at 7:30: "Ben-Hur" (1926, Fred Niblo; silent).... Feb. 14 at 2:30: "Regeneration" (1915, Raoul Walsh; silent).... Feb. 14 at 5: "Possessed" (1931, Brown).... Feb. 14 at 5: Short films by Shirley Clarke.... Feb. 15 at 2: "Arsène Lupin" (1932, Jack Conway).... Feb. 15 at 2:30: "Dreams That Money Can Buy" (1947, Hans Richter).... Feb. 16 at 2:30: "Son of the Sheik" (1926, George Fitzmaurice; silent).... Feb. 16 at 6: "Don Juan" (1926, Alan Crosland).... Feb. 17 at 3 and 6: "Potemkin" (1925, Sergei Eisenstein).... Feb. 17 at 6: "The Women" (1939, George Cukor).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of Hungarian films; in Hungarian, with English subtitles. Feb. 13 at 2 and 6:15: "American Postcard" (1975, Gábor Bódy).... Feb. 13 at 4 and 8:30 and Feb. 14 at 6:15: "Angi Vera" (1978, Pál Gábor).... Feb. 14 at 4 and 8:15 and Feb. 15 at 8:45: "Time Stands Still" (1983, Péter Gothár).... Feb. 15 at 4: "Film Novel—Three Sisters" (1977, Istvan Darday and Gyorgyi Szalai).... Feb. 16 at 2 and 6:15: "Photography" (1972, Pál Zolnay).... Feb. 16 at 4 and 8: "When Joseph Returns" (1975, Zsolt Kezdi-Kovács).... Feb. 17 at 2 and 6:15: "Gyuri" (1977, Pál Schiffer).... Feb. 17 at 4 and 8:15: "Family Nest" (1980, Béla Tarr).... ¶ Weekend showings for children. Feb. 14-15 at 2: "Matilda" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by Douglas Sirk. Feb. 14 at 3:15: "All That Heaven Allows" (1955).... Feb. 14 at 5: "There's Always Tomorrow" (1955).... Feb. 15 at 2: "Sign of the Pagan" (1954).... Feb. 15 at 4: "Slightly French" (1948).... ¶ Feb. 14 at 2: "Rock Hudson's Home Movies" (1992, Mark Rappaport).... ¶ Feb. 16-20 at 2: "Fairy Tale: A True Story" (1997, Charles Sturridge).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Feb. 15 at 7, the feature will be "The Promise" (1979, Gilbert Cates).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 17 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "A Self-Made Hero" (†).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Feb. 28: "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" (1974, John Korty). (Showings Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 and 4; Thursdays and Fridays at 2, 4, and 6.)

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Feb. 11-13 at 6:30 and 9, Feb. 14-15 at 5, 7:10, and 9:20, and Feb. 16-17 at 6:30 and 9: "The Oyster and the Wind" (1997, Walter Lima, Jr.; in Portuguese).... Feb. 12 at 8: "Pier Light" (1997, John Buchanan).... Feb. 14-15 at 3: "La Bête Humaine" (1938, Jean Renoir; in French).

Paris, 4 W. 58th St.—Starting Feb. 13, and continuing for three weeks, fourteen films produced and/or directed by Ismail Merchant and James Ivory will be shown. For information about show times, call 688-3800.

The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Feb. 13-16 and Feb. 18-19: Four recent independent films—Suzanne Myers's "Alchemy," Chris Smith's "American Job," CLC Films' "The Delicate Art of the Rifle," and Hannah Weyer's "Arresting Gena."

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.—Feb. 13-19: A showing of films nominated for the 1998 Independent Spirit Awards. (For information about show times, call 465-8200, ext. 805.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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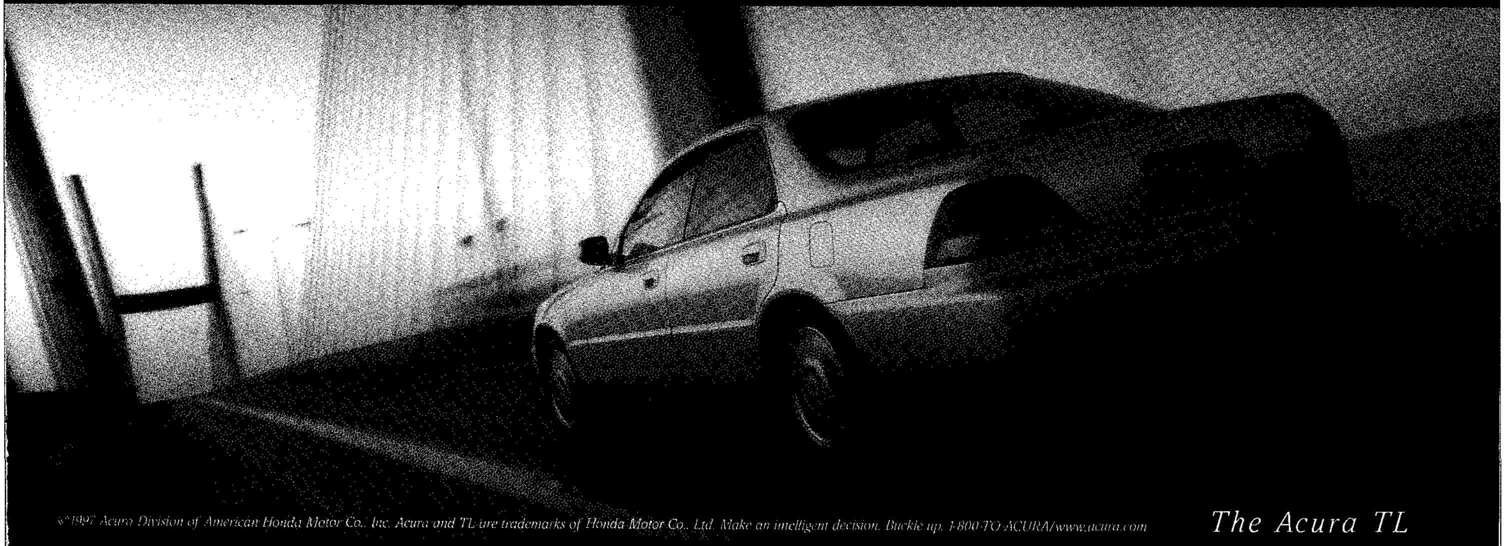
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



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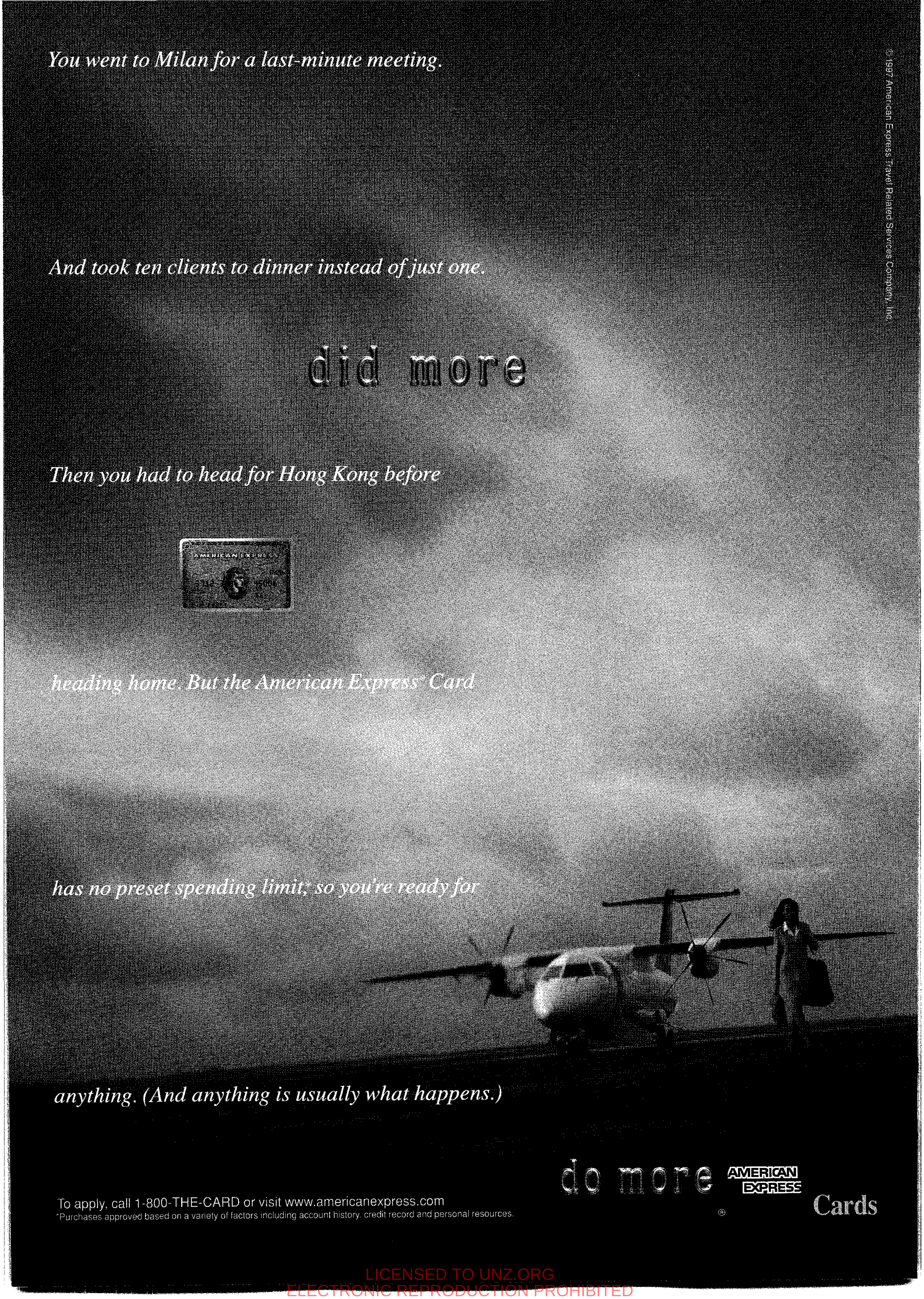

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

FAX FROM WASHINGTON

At the Blair dinner, a glamorous clamor at the eye of the storm.

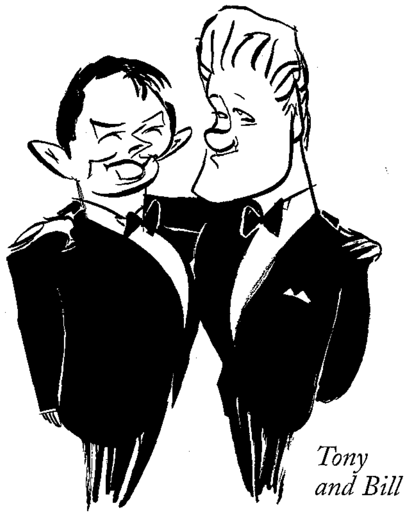
A WHITE HOUSE dinner is not the sort of evening out that anyone forgets in a hurry. But last Thursday night's extravaganza for Tony Blair had a sharper edge. The brilliance within seemed brighter on account of the howling darkness without.

So close your eyes and enter this parallel universe, where the squalor and rancor of the trivia cops are temporarily shut out. Now see your President, tall and absurdly debonair, as he dances with a radiant blonde, his wife. When the band up-tempos to "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," he throws back his head and laughs as Vice-President Gore—warm and self-deprecating, a best-man-at-a-wedding type—shouts "This is my song!" and does a funky chicken with a flushed, laughing Tipper Gore. See that cool heartthrob Harrison Ford, peering through eyeglasses at his bill of fare. See Madeleine Albright, not as a stern diplomatrix but as a humorous working broad. "My hair looks like hell when I get off those planes," she says. "So I have figured out the answer: the biggest hat I can find."

On this side of the glass, everyone is puzzlingly different from the way we read about them on the other side—Bill Clinton most of all. Amid the clichés about his charm, his glamour is undersung. For those of us who had dismissed him as a garrulous, blow-dried, lip-biting occupant of the oval orifice, this comes as a slight shock. Forget for a moment all the Beltway halitosis breathed upon his image. Forget the dog-in-the-manger, down-in-the-mouth neo-puritanism of the op-ed tumbrel drivers, and see him instead as his guests do: a man in a dinner jacket with more heat than any star in the room (or, for that matter, at the multiplex). As the President of the United States walks with Hillary and the Blairs into the State Dining Room, his height, his sleekness, his newly cropped, iron-filing hair, and the intensity of his blue eyes project a kind of avid inclusiveness that encircles every jaded celebrity he passes. He is vividly in the present tense and dares you to join him there.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

It is instructive at toast time to see him beside Prime Minister Blair. "They are both great C.E.O.s," Steven Spielberg had said at cocktail hour. Spielberg has long been close to Clinton, and he met Blair while on location in England this summer; the P.M. romanced him about making more movies in England. "They both have that global, modern, international thing, and they can inspire people," Spielberg remarked. "Tony's people would kill for him. He has turned all these very bright people, even top businesspeople in the U.K., into salesmen for Britain. And Bill is the same."



Tony and Bill

But, standing side by side for the toasts, they display differences that are more striking than their similarities. Blair has a kind of elfin glow. His slight figure and youthful purposefulness give him the air of a clever, unsullied young cousin of Clinton's, visiting from across the water to learn more about the venal perils of big-time power. The ardent look that Cherie Blair shoots him still has the undergraduate complicity of "Darling, we made it, didn't we?" He speaks emotionally of the night Churchill's eyes welled with tears as Harry Hopkins biblically pledged F.D.R.'s support for a beleaguered Britain: "Whither thou goest I will go . . . to the end." The code is not hard to break: Blair will not desert his friend.

After dinner, we make our way into the pink-and-blue light of a tented theatre raised on the West Terrace. The services of Stevie Wonder and Elton John—Sir Elton, thanks to Blair—are said to have been procured by Jeffrey Katzenberg. As Stevie, bulky and dreadlocked, finishes singing "My Cherie Amour," in honor of Mrs. Blair, Barry Diller raises his eyes to heaven in jokey, theatrical bliss. But, even as the listeners clap to Stevie Wonder's rhythms, Peter Jennings slips out, summoned by an emergency message. There is a small, uneasy stir of curiosity as he hurries up the aisle.

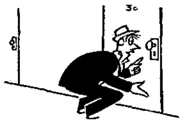
In the White House proper, the coffee and the dancing proceed, even though the guests of honor have now retired for the night. ("The place where you and Cherie are staying will now be forever known as Blair House," Clinton had mock solemnly proclaimed in his toast.) At eleven-thirty, Al and Tipper and Bill and Hillary are still boogying with no sign of strain or fatigue.

I turn to talk to John Doerr, the Silicon Valley venture capitalist, and when I turn back the Clintons have vanished. At the door of the White House, I see Peter Jennings. "Why did you leave?" I say. "This is Kayce's first White House dinner," he says, nodding toward his new wife, "and I had to be called out for another sleaze bulletin." "About what?" I ask. "Apparently, the *Times* is going with a story tomorrow that Betty Currie"—the President's personal secretary—"has turned." A Ken Starr leak? someone suggests. "Maybe. But this is not Matt Drudge," Jennings says gravely. "This is the *Times*. And Joe Lelyveld"—the newspaper of record's executive editor—"is not an easy lay."

At dawn the next morning, in a cold Washington drizzle, the tented theatre is being taken down, and the floodlights on the White House lawn belong to the television crews, ready for another day's stakeout. —Tina Brown

DEPT. OF SNOOPING

Following the trail of the President's private eye.



JACK PALLADINO is returning a phone call from somewhere in America. He won't say where he is, because he is in hiding. For two weeks, lawyers for Paula Jones have been trying to serve him with a subpoena.

"We serve people with subpoenas, so certainly we know how not to be served," said Palladino, a former lawyer who is now a two-thousand-dollar-a-day private investigator. Palladino, fifty-three, was hired by Clinton's 1992 campaign to check out the credibility of Gennifer Flowers and that of twenty-six or so other women. By digging up information about these women, he kept them out of the media and, in the process, earned a couple of nicknames: the Bimbo Buster and, less politely, the President's Dick.

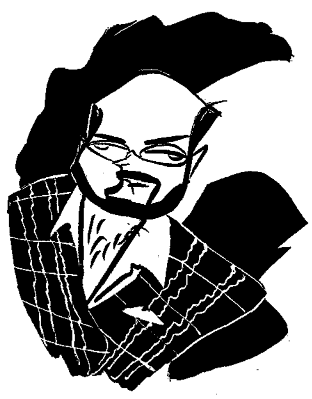
Paula Jones's legal team has reportedly found few, if any, other women who will corroborate her claims of having been sexually harassed. Palladino must seem a last, best hope, a sort of skeleton key to Clinton's darkest secrets. "The Paula Jones people are locked in mortal combat over my work," Palladino told me with barely disguised pride. "But it's all sealed," he said.

The shamus is a pro, however, and is not about to get caught by an amateur. "I felt no reason to come home," he said with a little laugh, adding that his "travels" had kept him scarce until the discovery phase of the Jones case ended, on January 30th.

"He said that?" a lawyer for President Clinton asked, after hearing that Palladino admitted that he'd been evading the subpoena. "That is so stupid. What does he want, to be held in contempt? Oh, God, just what we need!" A spokesman for one of Jones's lawyers, John Whitehead, of the conservative Rutherford Institute, declined to comment on what he calls "the Palladino situation." But clearly Jones's camp wants to know what Palladino detected in 1992, and what he did with the dish.

Gennifer Flowers, not surprisingly, has few kind words for Palladino. Until last month, when Clinton is said to have owned up in a deposition to a fling with Flowers, her story was not universally believed, and she blames Palladino. "He really tried to find something on me," she said recently. "People told me that he tried to put words in their mouths. They said he was very strange in approach, very sinister."

Palladino, who favors silk shirts and loud sports coats, has upset some people with his hardball approach. When he interviewed Flowers's former roommate, he reportedly asked whether Flowers was "the type to commit suicide." Clinton opponents saw this as a strategy to threaten other potential accusers. According to the University of Virginia political-science professor Larry Sabato, "It was a very aggressive campaign to suppress information."



Jack Palladino

Palladino and his wife and partner-in-sleuthing, Sandra Sutherland, deny covering up embarrassing facts about Clinton; instead, they say, they uncovered his opponents' lies. Former sixties radicals, they live in an old mansion in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Drawn to the area during its free-love days, they say they deplore the current obsession with the private lives of public figures. They have worked for Black Panthers and pornographers, drug dealers and Hell's Angels, and, more recently, Courtney Love and Suge Knight, of Death Row Records. Sutherland, who is blond, Australian, and a poet, describes their approach as "the honest con": at times, they believe that it is acceptable to use subterfuge and outright lies in the service of a larger truth about a client's case. (They claim that they never misrepresented themselves during the Clinton campaign.) Sutherland, who likes to say, "We love a good murder" with the casual cheer of Nora Charles, compares being a private eye to Denise Levertov's description of a poet as someone "with a genius for lying and an adoration of the truth."

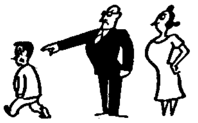
Palladino says that if it weren't for the time, expense, and attorney-client privilege, he would love to testify in the Jones case. "They'd find that not only would I not help—I'd be the worst nightmare they ever had! Because every woman I looked into either was manipulated or had come forward as a result of the media throwing money out there, or out of ideological craziness," he said. "There were tabloids offering fifty thousand to a hundred thousand dollars to any woman who could say with any credibility that she had slept with Clinton. Even so, there was almost zero response."

Palladino says he plays rough because that's how Clinton's enemies play. "I feel a real rage against lies," he said, forgetting for a moment his wife's comment about their usefulness in the detective profession. "I love libel. I am a heat-seeking missile that goes after a lie."

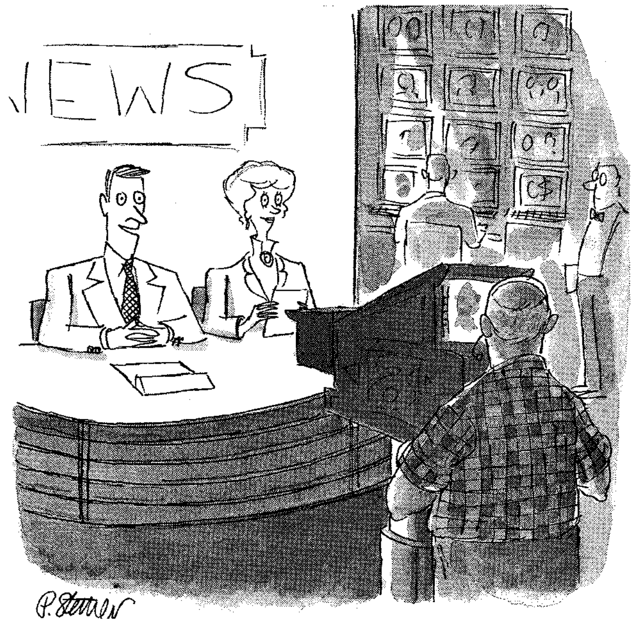
So what does he make of the Monica Lewinsky story? "Oh—ah," Palladino said. "Well, in a joking way, I have to say that either the President should have had the judgment never to get involved with someone like that—or else he should have kept me on permanent retainer." —Jane Mayer

DEPT. OF RATIONALIZATION

Monica Lewinsky and the old nature-nurture question.



IN one of the published excerpts from the taped conversations between Monica Lewinsky and Linda Tripp, Lewinsky seems to be urging her



"And now here's Cathie with the hypothetical portion of the news."

friend to fudge the truth about the alleged affair. "I would lie on the stand for my family," Lewinsky says. "That's how I was raised."

During the 1996 Presidential campaign, Bill Clinton barnstormed in Alabama, where he found himself the victim of negative campaign ads. "I was raised to respect people," he told a crowd, in criticizing such attacks. "The way I was raised, my mama would've whipped me if I'd ever said I was better than anybody else."

These days, there seems to be no escaping the way you were raised, like it or not. When a woman who'd been selected for the jury in the Unabomber trial was asked what she felt about the death penalty, she replied, "Only God can decide that. That's how I was raised." After the Knicks' coach, Jeff Van Gundy, chewed out his guard John Starks for receiving a technical foul, Starks said, "I don't take it personally. That's the way I was raised." When the actor Matt Damon was asked in a recent interview why he became a creative person, he said, "That's just the way I was raised."

The expression has an old-fashioned, aw-shucks ring to it. It sounds like the response some brave fireman in the nineteen-fifties might have given after rescuing a tot from a burning building. It's ritualized modesty: No, I don't deserve the credit, it's not me, it's the way I was raised. The implications of the phrase these days are very different from its connotations as recently as the early nineteen-eighties, when people spent years and hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to shake off the effects of the way they were raised. Back then, the child was the father of the screwed-up man. In an early episode of "Seinfeld," George decides he can be happy and successful in life only if he does exactly the opposite of what his upbringing taught him to do.

These days, the expression is used as an inarguable statement, a conversation ender. *Sorry, that's just the way I was raised.* Love it or leave it. There's also a family-values tinge to it—a sense that it has the Bill Bennett seal of approval. After thirty years of excuses and moral relativism, the words suggest a feeling of unapologetic absolutism: If you just follow what you learned in nursery school, everything will be fine.

On its face, the phrase rejects analysis: *I follow what I was taught because that's what I was taught to do.* The other sense of it is more self-aware: *My formative years conditioned me to do this, so this is what I'm comfortable doing.* It may be wrong, but it feels right. That is essentially what Monica Lewinsky went on to tell Linda Tripp: "That is how I was raised. . . . I was brought up with lies all the time . . . that's how you got along." She did not say, I was brought up with lies, that's why it's important for me to tell the truth. Instead, what we hear is, I'm playing the lying game because that's the only game I know.

At last year's Inaugural, the country singer Trisha Yearwood performed at a Presidential gala. She told the audience that although she wasn't overly political, "the way I was raised is that when someone is elected President you come together to support that person." Maybe that explains why the President's approval ratings are so high. —RICHARD STENGEL

DAFFY DICTIONARY DEPT.

Just what kind of gifts did the President give the intern?

The word from Washington is that the colorful peasant dress President Clinton may or may not have given Monica Lewinsky may or may not be a colorful peasant dress after all; what it may or may not be, rather, is a T-shirt—the sort of thing one might pick up, in the words of Ms. Lewinsky's lawyer, William H. Ginsburg, at "the White House souvenir shop." There is no souvenir shop in the White House, but there are White House souvenirs—official tchotchkes that leaders and functionaries hand out to visitors. These trinkets, ranging from embossed matchbooks to hats, are known in the trade as "chum." The term is of seafaring origin: chum is the stuff that fisherfolk throw over the side of the boat—fish guts, usually—to attract other fish. Political chum is generally less greasy but is no less enthusiastically received. Apart from the perennials—cufflinks, key chains, and pens—chum varies from Administration to Administration. The Carter crowd gave out standard-issue pens and lapel pins, the Reaganites distributed glass jars of jelly beans, the Bushies supplied visitors with White House golf gloves. The Clinton bunch, whose boss is a devoted hearts player, specializes in decks of playing cards bearing the emblem of Air Force One. Low-end Clinton chum: boxes of M&M's bearing the Presidential seal. High-end chum: gold eagle brooches, like the one the President gave Madeleine Albright. Intermediate, or chummy, chum: T-shirts, actual or hypothetical. —WENDY SMITH

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

ENTERTAINER-IN-CHIEF

Of course the President's ratings are up.

BY KURT ANDERSEN

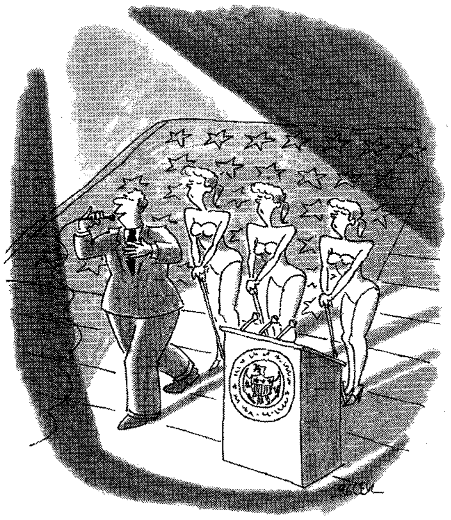
THE sudden spike in Bill Clinton's popularity is baffling only to those who still think of politics as an autonomous realm, existing apart from entertainment. For modern Americans, politics happens on television. And the titillating new story line that gooses the ratings of an old hit show (Paul and Jamie having a baby on "Mad About You," say) is now an established TV gimmick. Before the Monica Lewinsky subplot, the audience was beginning to get bored with the Clinton Administration. Now they're interested again.

The transmutation of Presidential politics into entertainment got going, of course, with J.F.K.: he used show biz brilliantly for four years as a telegenic Cary Grant manqué; it used him for four posthumous days as the star of the most compelling TV event ever. Up until then, the wall between government and show business was thick—just as the membrane between serious high art and trashy pop culture had been almost impermeable. The radical blurring of boundaries that Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein had brought irreversibly to modern art in the early sixties Kennedy brought at the same moment, to politics.

After Kennedy, President as performer became explicit, literal, and acknowledged. The first President from Los Angeles, Richard Nixon, made it to the White House only after saying "Sock it to me!" on "Laugh-In." Ronald Reagan's handlers created campaign-appearance tableaux with TV images in mind; Nancy Reagan performed a cameo on "Diff'rent Strokes"; Henry Kissinger did "Dynasty." In 1992, candidate Clinton put on shades to blow the saxophone on "The Arsenio Hall Show," and five years later President Clinton appeared as the character "President Clinton" in the made-for-TV movie "A Child's Wish."

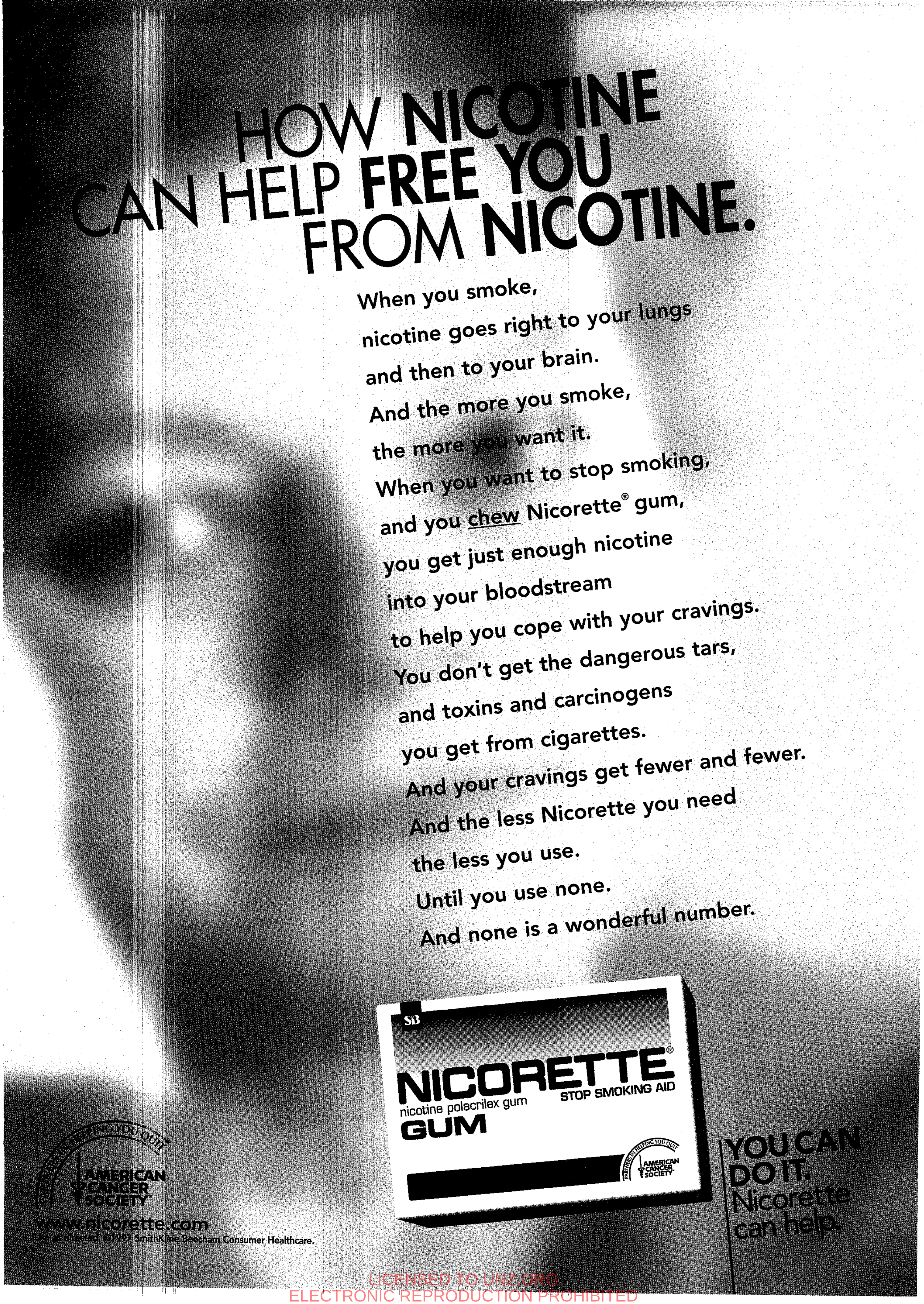
For a decade or two after J.F.K., the show-biz-politics trade deficit was very much in Washington's favor. Politicians used the tradecraft of entertainment to win office and stay there. But then in the eighties—some time after Reagan, the former movie actor, was shot by John W. Hinckley, Jr., because Hinckley had a crush on Jodie Foster—the balance of trade shifted, and politics in fundamental ways *became* entertainment. Washington journalists turned themselves into Punch-and-Judy figures for "The McLaughlin Group" and "Crossfire." A decade ago, Howard Stern and Don Imus were just smart, flabbergasting radio clowns; now Governor Whitman and Senator D'Amato are on-the-air pals of Stern's, and Imus trades one-liners with Presidential candidates. When congressmen appear on "Politically Incorrect" to joke around with starlets, and Vice-President Gore goes on Letterman, they're smirking about the very idea of political seriousness. It's the latest frontier of the culture's irony juggernaut: first it was cheeseballs like Wayne Newton and Robert Goulet playing along while hipsters ridiculed them; now it's our elected officials. By the time the White House objected to the unauthorized use of footage of Clinton in the Jodie Foster movie "Contact" last year, it seemed rote and disingenuous, bureaucratic white noise.

During the peaceful, prosperous Clinton years, as the large political questions have seemed mostly settled, the lack of interest in Washington has become profound. Aside from Clinton's reëlection, what were the compelling political stories of the last two years? "Primary Colors," Paula Jones, Sonny Bono skiing into a tree—in a word, farce. Yet even as politics has become a kind of low-production-value subgenre of show business, engaging only when it is entertaining, it has also remained, as ever, slightly behind the curve. (That's why old campaign commercials inevitably look several years more dated than commercials from the same year for potato chips or shampoo.) In the nineties, the pop-culture cutting edge has been a mass-market explicitness. In "Deconstructing Harry," the current Woody Allen movie, a woman performs fellatio on her brother-in-law during a family get-together, and the best-known episode of "Seinfeld" involves a masturbation contest. Don't go there? We're there. So when serious journalists started asking Clinton about having sex with an intern, people were not so much alarmed or appalled as thrilled and amazed. The ground had been softened up for an unfettered national conversation about Monica and Bill. The *Times*' vague euphemism for the alleged Paula Jones fellatio request had been "a crude sexual advance." How priggish the media still were way back then, in January.



JACK ZIEGLER

Until now, there had been topical subjects too grubby for anyone except comedians or the tabloids to touch, and on the other side of the bright media line were subjects of high consequence; for the first time ever, there is no line—it's both consequential and as grubby as it gets. Anchors and pundits can't not discuss Monica Lewinsky's "Presidential kneepads," so they overcompensate by keeping absurdly straight faces, affecting a solemnity that the slapstick subject cannot really sustain. Only entertainment programs seem easily able to strike the appropriate tone: the most nuanced and interesting remarks by the *Newsweek* reporter Michael Isikoff, who uncovered the story, were on David Letterman's show. Even Clinton's official defenders seem to understand what business they're in. Rahm Emmanuel, senior Presidential adviser (and the brother of a Hollywood agent), has said again and again to the TV cameras that "the only common thread" between Whitewater and Monica Lewinsky is that "they're both twenty-four years old." That's entertainment. ♦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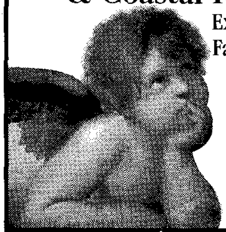

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LETTER FROM BOSNIA

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

Bob Dole has been given a task that is vital to peace: finding the missing.

BY MICHAEL KELLY

ONE afternoon in the early autumn of 1995, as the war in Bosnia was entering its last weeks, I was driving in a slanting thick rain on a back road from the city of Bihac to the city of Cazin, and I stopped to pick up a soldier who was hitchhiking to the front, about fifteen miles away. The soldier belonged to the 511th Brigade of the Bosnian Army's V Corps, one of the two best brigades in what was by far the best corps in the Army. He wore a uniform rigged out of castoffs from other armies, and sneakers on his feet. I guess he was eighteen or nineteen years old. He had no hair on his face, except a straggling of thin black shoots on his upper lip, and he was thin, like most people in the Bihac area at that time. His skin was faintly yellowish from malnutrition, which was also common.

He climbed into the back seat and lit a cigarette. It was late in the day, almost dusk, and chilly. I had the heat on, with my window open only a few inches, and the cigarette smoke and the steam from his rain-wet clothes made a homey smell of burning tobacco and damp wool. When he had finished the cigarette, he stubbed out the butt in the ashtray in the door handle and began talking. He spoke in Serbo-Croatian—or Bosnian, as he would have said—and the translator retooled his words into English, which lent a slightly unreal and theatrical distance to them, as if they were coming from the radio.

He said that a few days before, in the aftermath of the V Corps's successful effort to drive the Serbs out of Bosanska Krupa, he had been walking in the woods of a hill overlooking the town when he had come unexpectedly upon a Serb soldier, whom he captured without incident. As he stood there, pointing his rifle at his prisoner, he realized that he knew the man. They had grown up together, and had gone to school together, in the city of Prijedor, about fifty miles from where they now stood, a place where both Muslims and Serbs had long lived as neighbors. In April, 1992, near the beginning of the war, the Serbs of Prijedor took control of the city in a swift, brutal coup, and began killing and expelling the Muslims there, as part of an ethnic-cleansing sweep throughout northern Bosnia. The captured Serb soldier had taken part in this.

The Bosnian soldier who was telling me this story in the car on the way to Cazin had fled Prijedor with all his family, except for his father. His father had refused to leave their home, and he had been missing ever since.

"What happened to my father?" the Bosnian soldier asked the Serb soldier. The Serb was silent for a moment, and then he said, "I am sorry to say he is not alive. He died soon after you left Prijedor." He did not say, but neither did he have to say, that the Bosnian soldier's father had died because the Serbs had killed him.

"You remember that we were friends," the Serb said. The Bosnian didn't say anything. "You remember that we were classmates." The Bosnian still didn't say anything. "Is there a future, do you think, for Bosnians and Serbs together in this country?" the Serb asked.

At this point, my passenger, sitting there in the back seat, in the washing-day warmth, said, "So I said to him, 'Yes, there is, but not for you and me.' And then I shot him."

BEFORE the war in Bosnia, the city of Prijedor had a hundred and twelve thousand inhabitants. Today, 1,022 of its residents—all of them Muslim, or, as is said, Bosniac—are listed by the International Committee of the Red Cross as missing.

What happened in Prijedor happened all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Red Cross, which uses the most conservative accounting, lists 19,323 people as missing from the war. Most of these are presumed to be dead, and most died in ethnic-cleansing operations. The great bulk of the missing, 16,152 people, are classified as Bosniac. Their disappearances created in some towns a hole of a hundred people, in others a loss of a thousand or more. Occupying its own magnitude of disaster, there is Srebrenica, a city of forty thousand people that fell to the Serbs on July 11 and 12, 1995. The Red Cross lists 7,364 people as missing from Srebrenica. Others believe that the missing must still be alive somewhere. They speak of hundreds or thousands of "hidden detainees" in secret underground prisons. They are easy marks for crooked government officials and con artists posing as middlemen between the governments, who pocket the money they pretend to pass on as bribes in deals that never quite come off.

Conventional warfare most often produces relatively small numbers of missing of themselves. In the past four years, only 1,421 of the cases of people missing from the war in the former Yugoslavia have been resolved.

GIVEN all these difficulties, the task of hunting for the missing requires a special person. You need someone who is at least a little desperate for something to do with his life, someone with a solid streak of perversity, someone who is attracted to failed causes and dismal realities. You need, in a sense, a loser. Early last fall, it occurred to President Clinton that Bob Dole would be ideal for the job.

Towns like Srebrenica were stripped of three generations—the husbands, the fathers, the sons.

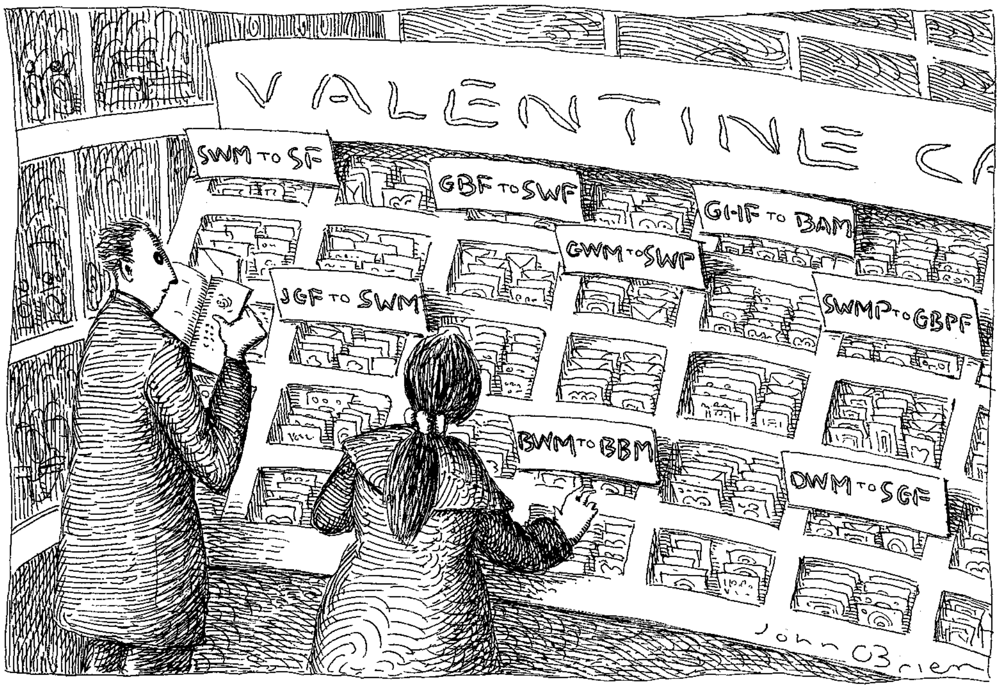
GILLES PERESS/MAGNUM

The idea in ethnic cleansing is not simply to get rid of an undesired population but, more precisely, to get rid of the problem cases among the undesired population—the political, social, business, and religious leaders, and all potential armed resisters. In practical terms, this means getting rid of the men, especially the men between the ages of eighteen and fifty. More than ninety-two per cent of the missing in Bosnia—17,842—are men. Places like Srebrenica have been stripped of three generations: the potential husbands, the husbands, the fathers. It is not very unusual in Bosnia to meet a woman who has lost both her husband and her father, or her husband and her sons.

Many of the survivors assume the worst, but they need to know for sure; they need to know which body in which mass grave belongs to them. Others be-

people, scattered over time and place. (There are 2,097 Americans still missing from the Vietnam War, which was fought over a period of ten years and which involved two million U.S. military personnel in or offshore Vietnam.) Ethnic cleansing produces relatively large numbers in isolated times and places. And it produces them through a process that is illegal. These two factors lend to the task of finding the missing an array of difficulties. The difficulties begin with the criminal aspect. Most of the missing were murdered, and were buried in hidden mass graves. These graves and any information about who is in them represent evidence of a capital war crime. So right away any investigation runs up against the natural disinclination of government officials to provide evidence that can be used toward the eventual hanging

The job, specifically, was that of chairman of the International Commission on Missing Persons, a committee that Clinton had formed in the summer of 1996 and which was composed of distinguished elder statesmen with time on their hands. Under its first chairman, the former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the commission held a few meetings and made a few fact-finding trips, and established an office in Sarajevo. It did not, however, accomplish much in the way of actually solving the cases of the missing. Some critics said that was at least partly the fault of Chairman Vance, who was in his late seventies and did not seem to bring much energy to the job. Vance's



term ended on November 8th, and Clinton appointed Dole, who is seventy-four, to replace him.

Dole was happy to get the call from the President. He has been one of Bosnia's most serious supporters in American politics, and his commitment is emotional, that of someone who has a visceral knowledge of war. When I asked him why he had got involved, he replied, with a sort of stream-of-consciousness disgust, "You know, nobody was paying attention. Things would happen, the President wouldn't do anything, nobody was doing anything. And you would have terrible things happen—Srebrenica, women and children not able to walk the streets in Sarajevo—and you just see more and more of it every day on television, you hear more and more of it, you have to do something, you really do."

Dole had another, more personal reason for wanting the job, and he talked about it recently, sitting up late on the twelve-hour flight aboard one of the Boeing 707s used as Air Force Two, which carried him to the former Yugoslavia on his first official tour as chairman of the commission. "My dad, you know, he was a working man, wore his overalls every day, he worked for forty some years, but he finally quit," Dole said. "And he'd go home and get up and there's no place to go. So he'd take out the garbage and sweep the walks and mow the lawn. You know, you can only do that once or twice a day, mow the lawn a couple of times a day."

It is not really the case that Bob Dole has had nothing to do since November, 1996, except cut the grass. He has a job at the Washington law firm of Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard, McPherson & Hand. It is an easy job—Dole neither litigates nor formally lobbies; his primary function is simply to attract rich clients—and it pays well, reportedly six hundred thousand dollars annually. Dole still enjoys the perks of public life. He has a suite of ten rooms in Verner, Liipfert's downtown Washington offices, and a press secretary and a chauffeur who drives a Cadillac with Kansas plates. He also enjoys at least some of the attention of public life. Since the election, Dole has appeared on the David Letterman show and has made television commercials in which he gently mocks himself in the service of Visa check cards and Dunkin' Donuts. He is popular enough to command a fee of up to fifty thousand dollars per speech, and last month he spent three days shaking hands and accepting thanks on a "farewell tour" of Kansas.

None of this, though, has much meaning beyond the pursuit of money. What has meaning is that, on the evening of January 16th, Dole stood in the V.I.P. room at Andrews Air Force Base, waiting for the Vice-President's plane to take him to Sarajevo, and the telephone rang, and it was the President, for him. It was only a courtesy call, good luck and bon voyage, but it made Dole beam.

• •

"IT'S good to be going here," Dole said as the plane began its descent into Sarajevo. "I could get elected in Bosnia." This reminded his young press secretary, Joyce Campbell, of a remark Dole made on another recent trip: "I'm just flying around looking for a country that needs a President."

The next day, Sunday, January 18th, Dole and his fellow-commissioners—Max van der Stoel, of The Hague; Cornelio Sommaruga, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross; and Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, the former foreign minister of Pakistan—hosted the public centerpiece of their visit to Sarajevo, a meeting with members of the associations of the families of the missing of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meeting took place in a conference room in the Hotel Grand, which is a nice, modern hotel that has opened since the end of the war. There were twelve groups represented around the table: the missing of Srebrenica, the missing of Mostar, the missing of Bugojno, and so on. Erwin Böhi, a dapper and officious Swiss gentleman who is the commission's Sarajevo staff director, opened the meeting by telling the witnesses that they would be limited to three minutes' speaking time per group. Then the testimony began.

It was awful, desperate stuff. "We come before you as the saddest population in Europe," the first speaker, Branko Panic, began. "We are all people looking for our beloveds, some hoping to find them alive, while many will be satisfied just by finding their bodies. Many mothers have said they will be happy just to find three ribs belonging to their sons. They will be happy just to know where to bring candles with which to mourn them."

Vlada Erkapic, of Bugojno: "Between the eighteenth of July and the twenty-fifth of July, 1993, during the Muslim-Croat conflict, three hundred Croatian soldiers and six hundred civilians were detained in Bugojno. They were taken to the football stadium and they, our dearest relatives, were taken away in groups of one or two, and it has been five years since then and we still are waiting to find out if they are dead or alive. The Muslim authorities in Bugojno know where they are. They know where the mass grave is, if there is one. The high-ups in the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina know it. But silence covers everything."

Sabra Mujic, Srebrenica: "Mr. Dole, I am a mother who saw with her own eyes her sons taken away. I lost two sons and my husband. I have not a single member of my family anymore, and there are thousands of mothers like myself. I beg you to do all you can for the mothers. You are the last hope. You must make Mr. Milosevic release our sons from the underground prisons to which he holds the keys. Please do something. Please tell him to release our husbands and sons. Please, Mr. Dole, we are looking for someone who is human enough to help us. Maybe it is you, Mr. Dole."

This despair and wild, doomed hope would have been difficult for the most eloquent and emotionally facile of politicians to adequately answer. Dole, whose access to the language of emotion is barely adequate to cope with the routine of life, could only say that he knew from his own long involvement with the issue of America's missing in Vietnam that "one missing is too many," and that he and the other commission members would "renew our efforts." He ended with a weak promise: "There are some funds. I will be seeing Mr. Milosevic tomorrow and I hope to impress upon him the importance of coöperating, and we'll be back again in late March, April."

As the commission members stood, there was for a moment or two a frozen quiet in the room, and then everyone got up at once and swarmed them. Old men, old women, some weeping, surrounded Dole. They pressed family snapshots on him. A woman came up on Dole's right and thrust at him a creased, dirty bit of newspaper. "Mr. Dole, my son, he is alive, it says so here in this paper. He was taken to a prison in Serbia on 16 January 1993." Dole, trapped, miserable, took the paper from her. "I will give this to Mr. Milosevic tomorrow," he said.

More people surrounded the commissioners; the complaints were coming with open bitterness now. A furious young man maneuvered Max van der Stoel up against the table and upbraided him about an infamous event in the fall of Srebrenica, the handover to the Serbs of two hundred and thirty-nine Bosniacs who had come to a Dutch base for protection.

"Our soldiers were outnumbered, outgunned," van der Stoel said.

"Their camp was never attacked, sir; the Serbs never entered their camp, sir; I was there, sir," the young man said. "I was the U.N. interpreter in that camp and I saw the Dutch troops throw my entire family out in front of my eyes, sir, and I have never seen a member of my family again, sir."

Van der Stoel, in a small, fading voice, said, "We are still investigating."

AFTER the meeting, the commissioners, looking weary and somewhat battered, trudged upstairs to attend a cocktail reception for Sarajevo's diplomatic community. Dole made an amusingly self-deprecating speech—"When I first heard about this commission, in June of 1996, I had in mind that I would appoint Bill Clinton to chair it," he said, "but something happened in November to change my mind"—and promised to work hard.

One of the people listening was Dr. Laurie Vollen, a member of Physicians for Human Rights. Dr. Vollen is working on the business of what she calls "exhumation and identification." She explained, matter-of-factly over a glass of wine, some of the complexities of the job.

There are, she said, layers upon layers of both political and forensic complications. A basic political problem that ethnic cleansing produces is one of proportionality. All the governments involved—the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Croatia—possess, as Vollen put it, "the trader's mentality: I'll tell you where your bodies are if you'll tell me where my bodies are." But trading doesn't work here, because the Bosnians are missing many more bodies than the Serbs and the Croats combined. "The Serbs say to the Bosnians: We won't give you back your bodies until you give us back ours. But there just aren't that many Serb bodies to give back."

In the relationship between each government and its own people, there is another difficulty. For governments dealing with problems such as Bosnia's massive unemployment and Serbia's bankrupt

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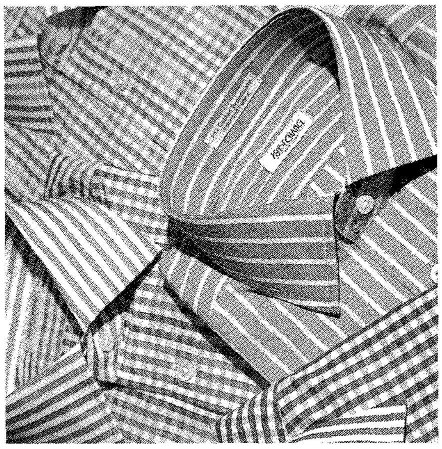

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economy, finding and identifying the war dead is not a priority. "We have asked the Bosnian government many, many times to form a national forensic team, and have received no help at all," Vollen said. "The federal government gives money to the canton governments, which divvy it out to the police departments to hire local forensic pathologists, but these pathologists are paid according to what they exhume, whether they identify the bodies or not, so there is no motivation for them to do the work of identification."

After the political impediments come the forensic ones. "You must remember there are hundreds if not thousands of mass graves," Vollen said. "To start with, you have to find the grave. In the best scenario, you have surviving eyewitnesses who take you to the site. Then you just go poking around in the earth with a stick. You take the stick out and smell it, and if it smells like corpses you've got a grave. Another way you can tell is that grave sites sometimes have different vegetation than the surrounding area—you don't see trees or big bushes at a grave, only new vegetation, and it is usually just weed cover. More commonly, you don't know the precise location of the grave, but you know the general vicinity, and searching an area like that requires technical resources we don't have, such as ground-penetrating radar. Once we find a grave, we have to test it for mines and, if it is mined, de-mine it. Then you begin the actual work of exhumation and identification."

Forensic pathologists identify bodies with evidence ranging from the general (age, height, clothes) to the particular (teeth, DNA samples). If you are looking for only one person, and you find a body that matches that person's general physical characteristics and that body is garbed in the clothes the missing person was last seen wearing, you can be reasonably sure you have found the person. But if you are dealing with hundreds of missing you must turn to the more laborious, more precise methods. If you are dealing with bodies in the thousands, even those methods are not enough.

"Consider the difference between Vukovar and Srebrenica," Vollen said. "In Vukovar, where we were dealing with just a couple of hundred bodies, we had a lot of variety among the missing to help us. They were men, women; they were young, old; there was a lot of variety in clothing; some people had received much better dental care than others. Then we were able to take DNA samples from the relatives of all the missing, and we just matched those samples with forensic samples. In Srebrenica, where there are nearly eight thousand missing, you had a population of missing that was first of all much more homogeneous, and there was not much in the way of dental records, because the standard dental procedure in rural Bosnia is extraction. And DNA matching is especially difficult here, because Srebrenica was a place where people had been intermarrying for a long time, and this produces what is called redundancy—such a high frequency of repeated patterns that you cannot easily distinguish large numbers of relatives from one another. You can see it gets quite difficult."

To date, the Physicians for Human Rights team at Srebrenica has identified a total of twelve bodies.

THE goals of Dole's trip were carefully modest. The commissioners had the same two principal chores to perform in each of the capital cities they visited—Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb. One was to meet with the representatives of the families of the missing and to hear their testimony. The other was to meet with political leaders and to press the causes of the families of the missing—to press the cause of the Bosnians with the Serbs, of the Serbs with the Croats, of the Croats with the Bosnians and the Serbs. These things were done, and done with sincerity. But it turned out that modesty was a wise course. What happened in the meeting in Sarajevo was typical of the entire trip. It wasn't that nothing was accomplished at all. But it was clear that there was a pretty large distance between what the commission for missing persons was doing—what little it was empowered to do—and what was required actually to resolve the issue of the missing.

In Belgrade, the meetings with the family associations took place in the Hyatt, a great hideous pile of marble and gilt in a great hideous suburb of leprous concrete. There were seventeen family-association members around the table, but only eight of them were authorized to speak, for four minutes apiece. The first person who came forward, Dragan Medic, whose son, a pilot, has been missing since 1991, spoke of his dissatisfaction with the blatantly pro-forma nature of the thing. "I have been through meetings like this so often before, Mr. Dole," Medic said. "Mr. Richard Holbrooke himself promised me he was personally going to obtain the release of pilot Medic from President Tudjman of Croatia—and until now we have heard nothing."

Medic's words were echoed throughout the meeting. Mirjana Bozin-Miodrag, whose father disappeared after being arrested by Croatian authorities in June, 1990, in Vukovar, observed that "At every meeting, everyone has files, everyone takes notes, we submit lists. And there is never anything that comes of it. How many more times shall we have meetings and tell our sad stories, how many more times must we open our hearts? Mr. Dole, we have been telling our sad stories over and over again for six and a half years, and we never get anything in return but promises."

At the end of the allotted hour, Dole answered the accusations with a bleak candor that must have been unexpected, but that American political audiences have come to know well. "As someone said, you get together and tell your sad stories—and they are sad stories—and nothing happens," he said. "The politicians all have political agendas. They say, 'We won't do this unless they do that.' And what happens? Nothing happens. Well, I don't want to raise anyone's expectations, because I know they have been raised and dashed before, but I promise you . . ." And here, where another sort of politician (the sort, say, who beat Dole in 1996) would have said something grand and grandiose, Dole simply said, "I can only promise you that our only interest is in helping families and that we will do our very, very best." One of the women at the table let out what was nearly a shout: "That's it? Shall we have another meeting today? Nothing? That's all?"

THE meetings with the heads of state also had a feeling to them of slogging in place, of heavy going without really getting anywhere. In Sarajevo, the commission met separately with two of the three members of the tripartite

Bosnian Presidency in a grand building, a drafty relic of Austro-Hungarian days. The first meeting, with Kresimir Zubak, the Croatian member, ended with vague promises of coöperation and a request by Zubak that Dole be so kind as to carry a message to Alija Izetbegovic, the Bosnian member of the Presidency, with whom Zubak was not at the moment speaking. Izetbegovic thanked Dole for the message from Zubak and asked him to carry a message back.

In the third Presidential meeting in Sarajevo, Dole was scheduled to meet with Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serbian member of the Presidency, on Sunday morning, on the neutral turf of the Swiss ambassador's home. On Saturday, Krajisnik demanded that Dole and the other commissioners meet him in Pale, the ski town outside Sarajevo, which the Serbs say is the capital of the state of Republika Srpska. Dole recognized this as a ploy. By journeying to Pale, the commission would impute a legitimacy to the idea that the Serb-held area of Bosnia constitutes a state. Dole told the Serbs that they had until 7 P.M. to show up in Sarajevo. The Serbs showed, but the meeting produced nothing beyond polite chat.

The meeting in Belgrade with Slobodan Milosevic, the President of what was Serbia and is now the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was the only one of the Presidential meetings to produce a concrete result. Dole and Milosevic talked for more than an hour and got along well. (Milosevic can be charming when he wants to be.) The meeting ended with Milosevic pledging that his government would hand over the files on some three hundred and ninety-three Croatians who have been missing from the border city of Vukovar since the 1991 Serbo-Croat war. Erwin Böhi sniffed that Milosevic's government had made this promise before, a year ago, and had not delivered on it. But Dole, who trusts his dealmaker's instincts, was sure that Milosevic wanted to do business, and he left Belgrade deeply pleased.

The final meeting, and the final event of Dole's trip, was on Monday evening, with the Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, in Tudjman's vast and rather ugly Presidential palace, in Zagreb. During the meeting, Dole attempted to fulfill the promise he had made in Belgrade to Dragan Medic, the father of the missing pilot, and he pressed Tudjman to release information. But this infuriated the Croats, and the meeting degenerated into bickering from which it never recovered. After it was over, the Croatian deputy prime minister continued to berate the commissioners in the corridor. "For seven years, we have not had a single request for information answered," he nearly yelled at Dole, waving his index finger in Dole's face. "Not a single request answered, not one body returned! That is the reality! Why should we answer their requests?" Dole listened, stonily. Later, he said that he told Tudjman, as the two men were making their farewells, that the meeting had been a "waste of time."

"Apparently, he's old rock-and-roll money."

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ON the flight back to Washington, Dole, perhaps affected by the Tudjman unpleasantness, seemed to be brooding about the limits of what the commission could accomplish. "You know, listening to those mothers and wives and sisters in those meetings," he said, "I hope I didn't raise their expectations. You try to make it clear every time that we can't promise anything, but we will work at it. But unless these people coöperate I don't see how we can do anything."

This depressing thought led Dole to another depressing thought. In Sarajevo, he had spoken privately with the Bosnian prime minister, Haris Silajdzic, whom he has known for ten years, and he had asked Silajdzic for his prognosis of Bosnia's future. "He was pretty unhappy, you know, just down, depressed," Dole rambled darkly on. "He says we're gonna end up with Bosnia partitioned, says it's gonna happen, says they're down to about twenty-eight per cent of the territory now. Yeah, he was a little discouraged." Dole trailed off, and his face for a moment took on that bleak, to-hell-with-it look that was the bane of his image managers in 1996.

The Balkans are discouraging. They have discouraged people who are more naturally sunny than Bob Dole. And it is hard to imagine that much good can come out of an ex-senator and three other old men flying around there a couple of times a year to listen to laments from widows and lectures from despots. But sometimes you get surprised. This time, Milosevic kept his promise. On February 3rd, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia handed over the three hundred and ninety-three files on the missing of Vukovar. It was a pittance, but it was something, and the old dealmaker had gotten it. ♦

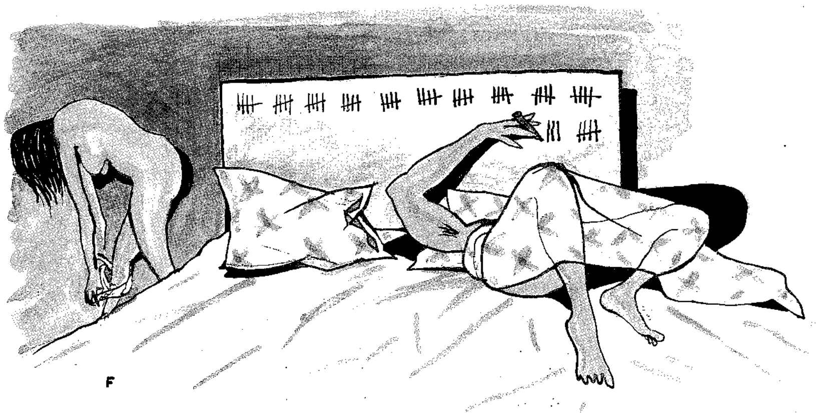
ANNALS OF ADDICTION

THE PATHOLOGY OF SEX

Why can't some people stop having it?

BY ABRAHAM VERGHESE

HAD you seen my best friend, David, who was also my tennis partner and a medical student on rounds with me six years ago, nothing about his pixieish face, his ready smile, or the half-swallowed laugh that punctuated his speech would have led you to imagine that at one time he had had a terrible intravenous-cocaine habit. You might have guessed from his accent that he was an Australian. His hips, which seemed too narrow for his broad shoulders, and his light, swaying tread might have led you to think that he was a tennis player. (He had, in fact, come to America on a tennis scholarship and had played briefly on the pro tour before starting medical school.) His grace on the court—a flowing slice backhand, a compact forehand, no grip change between the two, and an unerring instinct to take to the net—was difficult to reconcile with his past habit of mainlining up to twenty times a day. Nor did it fit with his story of having had daily seizures from cocaine excess, or of biting through his tongue so many times that it became three-fourths its original size.



Had you stood with me two years later, looking down at his body as it lay on a gurney in the mortuary, though, you might have assumed that a relapse and a cardiotoxic dose of cocaine had caused his death. He did relapse, but death came from a self-inflicted shotgun wound. It would have surprised you to know that to the end David was convinced that his undoing was not cocaine. He blamed another addiction—an addiction to sex.

I MET David shortly after I arrived in El Paso, in 1991, at about the time he was beginning his fourth year of medical school. He had spent the previous year working as a phlebotomist, regularly attending Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings, maintaining sobriety, and proving the sobriety with frequent urine tests—all to fulfill the conditions that the medical school had imposed in order for him to return. I take credit for reintroducing him to the simple pleasure of hitting a ball back and forth across a net. The mantra of that exchange was a soothing one for both of us, and a ritual that years of cutthroat competitive tennis had made him forget.

Our friendship was an unlikely one: a senior professor and a fourth-year medical student. On the tennis court, our roles were reversed: he was the teacher and I the student. In a sense, we were both in recovery. I was coming out of a marriage, and was living in self-imposed exile in a walkup apartment in west El Paso, while he lived in a rooming house in east El Paso—the best housing either of us could afford.

A year and a half into our friendship, on a weekend when his girlfriend was out of town, he bought cocaine, shot up, and immediately went out and got more. He was by then an intern, working very long hours. There were other reasons one could invoke: his mother had died; his

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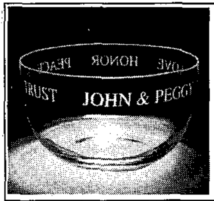

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ex-girlfriend had moved back to El Paso; his current girlfriend had read in his journals that he was still sexually obsessed with his ex-girlfriend, and she was furious. To anyone looking back, it was apparent that his mood had soured months before his actual use of cocaine. In recovery-speak, he had climbed back on his "pity pot," retreated to "stinking thinking," and forgotten the "attitude of gratitude." When he relapsed, he was immediately discovered and whisked away, this time to one of the best treatment facilities in the country.

When David returned, after six months of in-patient rehab, he looked healthy and muscular. He was bursting with enthusiasm, and was convinced that, finally, his real problem had been addressed: not cocaine addiction but sexual addiction. I remember how carefully he pronounced those words, as if their sound was still new and exotic. When I gently teased him about the term—it sounded like an oxymoron—he became agitated, and his eyes shone like a zealot's. My jocularity about sex was precisely the problem, he said. Sex was so all-American—the great come-on in the merchandising of everything from cars to soap, the measure of robust health, the key to all entertainment, the major focus of every talk show, the subtext of our Western materialism, and the yardstick of success. For him, though, sex was just like cocaine: he would become preoccupied with an image in a magazine or with pornography and then go into a trancelike, heightened state of sexual tension. He would try to pick up women in bars, or at work, or even at the laundromat. For the sake of a quickie, he had risked arrest, physical assault by a jealous other, and venereal disease. And, as soon as he had his sexual purging, tremendous remorse and guilt would wash over him. Then he had to make an entreaty for secrecy, and live with the fear of discovery. He would feel shame, which he could diminish, temporarily, only by beginning the cycle again. Or by using cocaine.

The passion of his argument silenced me. I was well aware that his foreignness and his politeness got him looks of interest from women at the hospital. They seemed to want to mother him and to shepherd him around town, as if he had just descended from a coolibah tree and knew nothing about the ways of West Texas. We had joked about this, but now I realized that there was much more to those flirtatious glances than I had imagined.

"I didn't know," I said.

"How would you? Those are our deepest, darkest secrets."

I HAD come to believe, as an internist and an infectious-diseases clinician, that one out of every ten patients I saw in my county hospital was there for some problem directly related to alcohol and other drug addictions: heart-valve infection, overdose, seizures, abscessed veins, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, cirrhosis, H.I.V. infection, alcohol-related cardiomyopathy, bleeding from the stomach, dementia, hepatic encephalopathy. And this estimate didn't include patients whose problems—bullet and knife wounds, motor-vehicle injuries, strokes, chronic lung disease, major depression—were indirectly related to drugs. In my fifteen years or so as a clinician, however, I had never made a diagnosis of sexual addiction.

To someone used to reading about, say, typhoid or cholera, where a discrete clinical syndrome had a single and reproducible cause—"a single switch at the center of things," as the physician Lewis Thomas has put it—the literature on sexual disorders resembled a shifting terrain. I had always thought that psychiatric diagnosis, by its very nature, was subjective: there were no simple blood tests or X-ray abnormalities to confirm a clinical suspicion. The need for psychiatrists from Bangor to Biloxi to be certain that they were referring to the same disease in their discourses spawned the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Published in 1952, and generally referred to as *DSM-I*, it listed homosexuality and nymphomania as forms of mental illness. By 1980, when *DSM-III* came out, the "disease" of homosexuality had disappeared.

Undoubtedly, this shift had much to do with the radical change that took place in the American sexual landscape in the sixties and seventies. Sex was demythologized and stripped of its puritan coat. There was a new vocabulary—"wife swapping," "one-night stands," and "cruising." The Pill, the legalization of abortion, potent cures for gonorrhea and syphilis contributed to this outpouring of societal libido. The new diseases listed in *DSM-III*—as Martin Levine and Richard Troiden have pointed out—were those of "not enough sex": anorgasmia, ejaculatory incompetence, erectile insufficiency. But sexual mores were changing once more. Herpes had dampened free love. Awareness of

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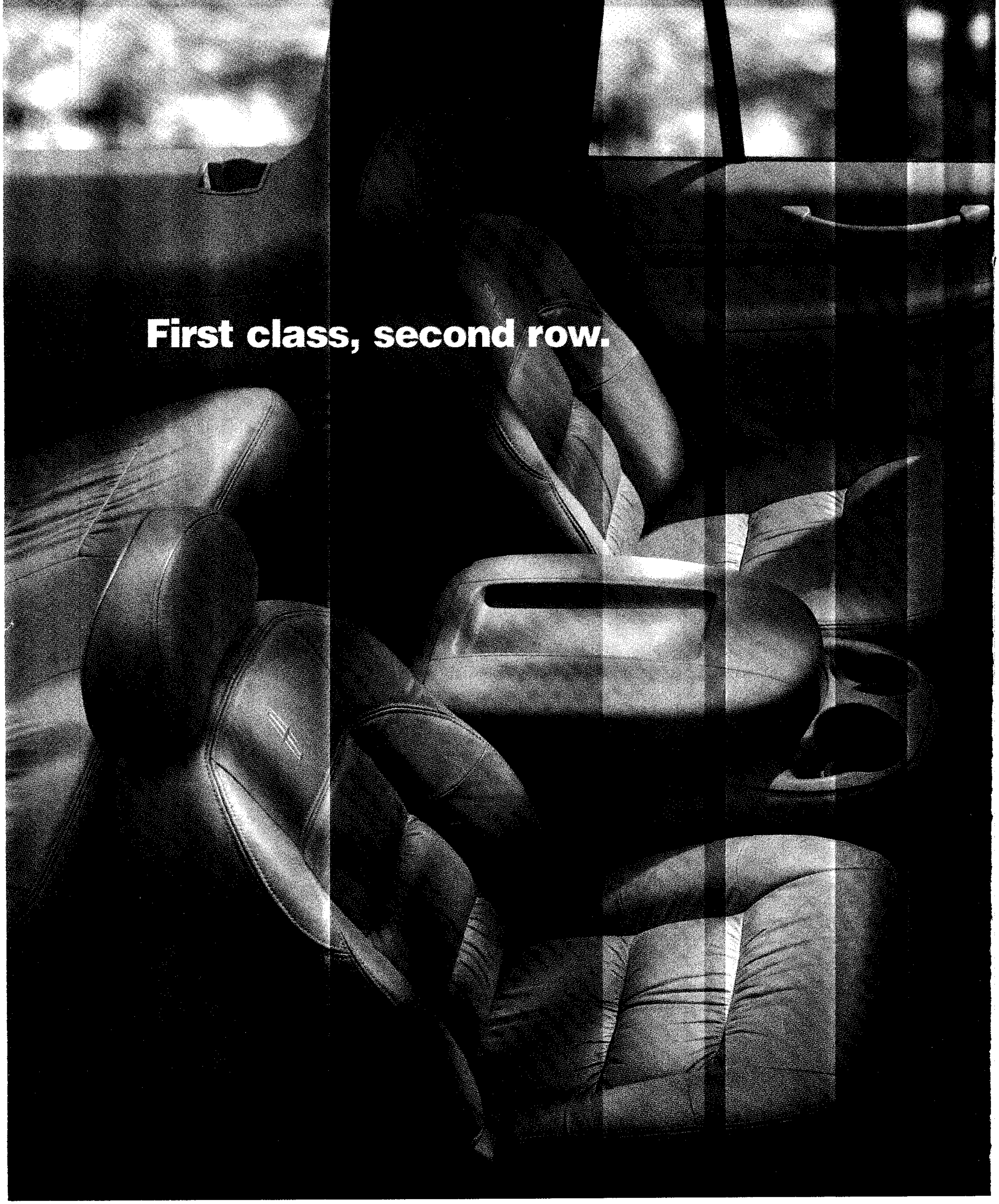

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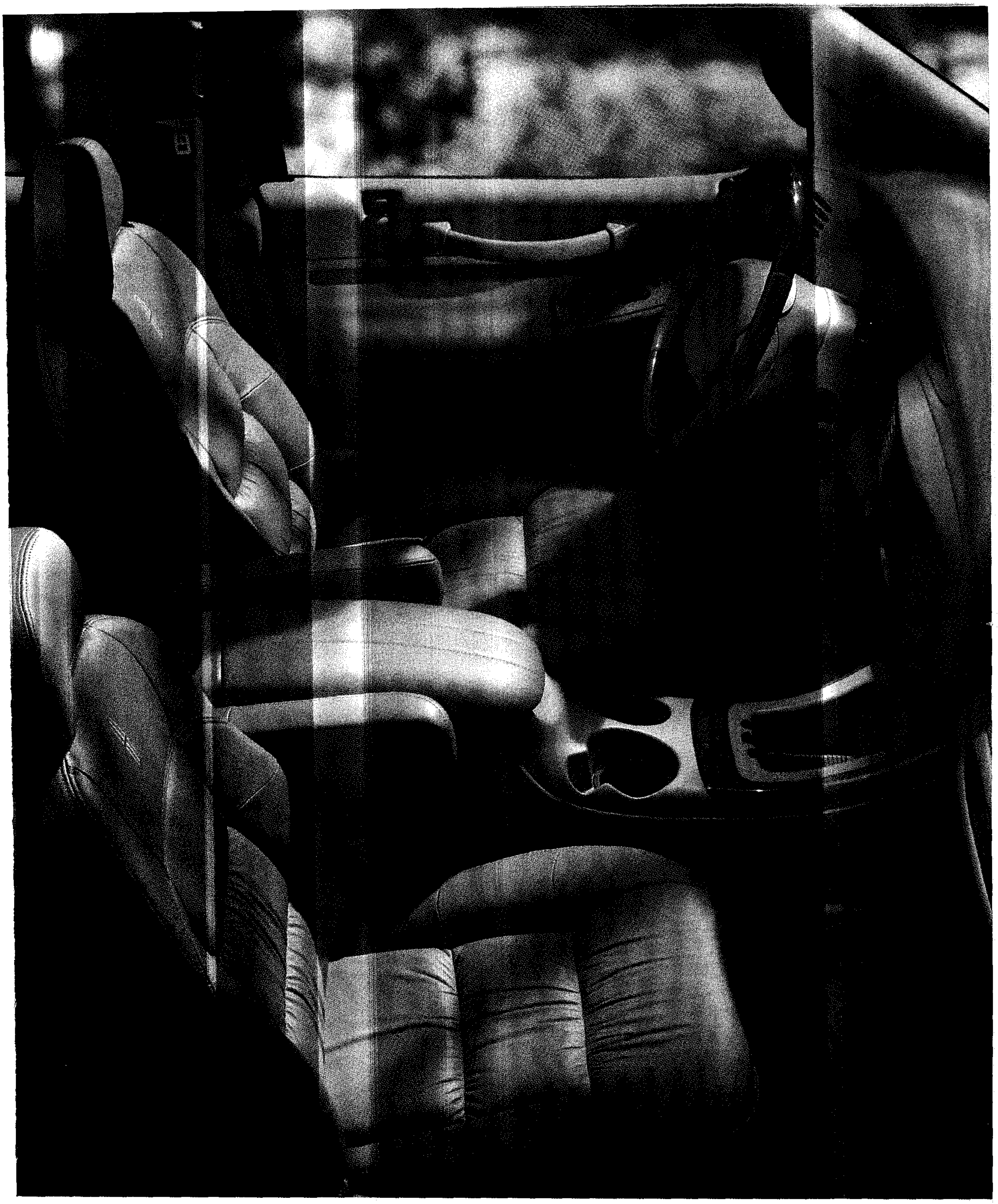

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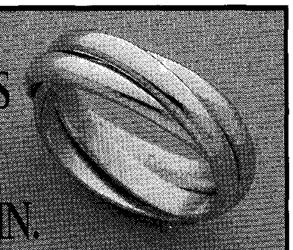

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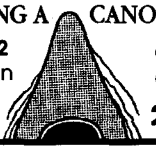

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hepatitis B and then of AIDS made body fluids a hazard. There were clearly risks to sexual overgrazing. It was time for the emergence of a new ethic, that of "too much sex," with its associated new diseases.

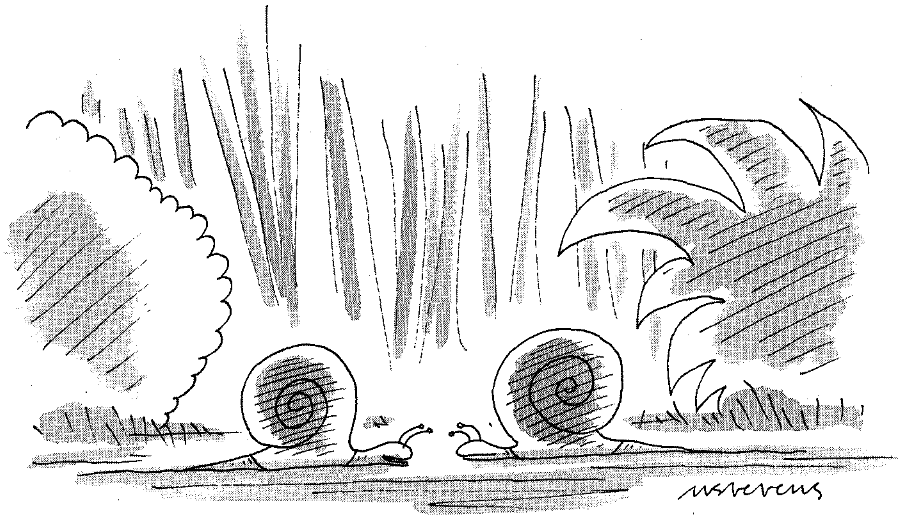
In 1983, Patrick Carnes, a former prison psychologist, published "The Sexual Addiction," a book that put this term on the professional map and also generated great interest in the lay press. Carnes had first observed sexual addicts in the seventies, but did not publish his book on sexual addiction until the eighties, because it was "an idea whose time had not come." Carnes was not the first, however, to see sexuality through the lens of addiction. Bill Wilson, in the A.A. bible—the Big Book, written in 1939—alludes to it: "Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there. It's so easy to get way off the track. . . . We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't." His suggestion was that each relationship be subjected to the test of whether it was selfish or not, and that the alcoholic pray for guidance and strength to do the right thing.

In the mid-seventies, a member of a Boston A.A. group began to practice "sexual sobriety," modifying the traditional A.A. twelve steps to focus on his compulsive sexual need. He formed Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, and their Big Book equivalent appeared in 1986. Its first two chapters tell a compelling personal story that is not dissimilar to David's. (When I met David, he had already been married and divorced twice.)

Given the universality of sex, much rests on the definition of what constitutes sexual addiction. Carnes described it as a "pathological relationship with a mood altering experience"—the emphasis resting on the experience or on a behavior rather than on a drug or a chemical. Sexual addicts were those whose sexual behavior had become unstoppable, despite serious consequences: job loss, breakdown of the family, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy.

Patrick Carnes developed a twenty-five-question sexual-addiction screening test. In it, a response in the affirmative to thirteen questions or more suggests addiction. Some of the questions are clear-cut: Have you had sex with minors? Were you abused as a child? Do your parents have a history of trouble with sexual behavior? But others are disturbing in their generality: Have you subscribed to or regularly purchased sexually explicit magazines? Have you ever worried about people finding out about your sexual activities? Has sex been a way to escape your problems?

David's behavior, if viewed through the Carnes model of sexual addiction, stemmed from a "personal belief system" (the programming about sex and relationships which one receives from parents and society) that was very "sex negative." When coupled with low self-esteem, such a belief system resulted in a lasting shamefulness. Then, according to Carnes, an individual could enter an obsessive cycle of sexual behavior. Carnes posited a progression of untreated addiction. The initiation phase was characterized by pivotal sexual acts or experiences that were seared into the memory. In the establishment phase, there was a repetition of an addictive cycle of preoccupation, ritualization, and sexual acting out, followed by shame and guilt. The behavior could then escalate, or, at times, deëscalate, or be subsumed into another addictive behavior, or it could progress to an acute phase. Carnes's model certainly seemed to fit what Da-



"The Middle East peace process seems to be moving right along."

WHITE SPINE

Liar, I thought, kneeling with the others,
how can He love me and hate what I am?
The dome of St. Peter's shone yellowish
gold, like butter and eggs. *My God,* I prayed
anyhow, as if made in the image
and likeness of Him. Nearby, a handsome
priest looked at me like a stone; I looked back,
not desiring to go it alone.
The college of cardinals wore punitive red.
The white spine waved to me from his white throne.
Being in a place not my own, much less
myself, I climbed out, a beast in a crib.
Somewhere a terrorist rolled a cigarette.
Reason, not faith, would change him.

—Henri Cole

vid had told me about his own behavior.

The use of the word "addiction" in the context of sex generated intense controversy. Psychiatrists, psychologists, sexologists, and addictionists stepped in: some felt that the disorder was best characterized as sexual compulsivity; others thought it to be sexual impulsivity; and still others proposed it to be a variant of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Perhaps because of the lack of consensus, the term "sexual addiction" does not appear in *DSM-III* or *DSM-IV*, which was published in 1994. Yet what Carnes would call sexual addiction is listed under "Sexual Disorder Not Otherwise Specified," with one of three cited examples being "Distress about a pattern of repeated sexual relationships involving a succession of lovers who are experienced by the individual only as things to be used."

If the American Psychiatric Association chose to be coy or conservative about whether sexual addiction exists or not, this wasn't the case with the public. It was a catchy new phrase, bringing new life to the topic of sex just when it appeared that there was little more to say about it. Soon it was trotted out by well-known people, such as Dick Morris and the late Michael Kennedy, who had been caught in embarrassing situations. The phrase brought with it a certain protective mantle.

One of the more vocal critics of the idea of sexual addiction is Marty Klein, a California marriage counsellor and sex therapist whose home page on the Web is entitled "Ask Me Anything." In his published work Dr. Klein has expressed concern that people are diagnosing their conditions as sexual addiction, and that the sexual-addiction movement is aggressively training non-sexologists in the treatment of sexual problems. Sex addicts now have a cachet as sex experts: Ted Bundy, on the basis of his statements before he was put to death for his serial killings, is viewed as both the proof of and the expert on the deleterious effects of pornography. Implicit in the sexual-addiction model, Klein thinks, are unstated beliefs that the "goal" of sex is intimacy, that sex outside a monogamous, loving, heterosexual relationship is less healthy, and that there should be limits to sexual expression—seen notably, for example, in the theory that masturbating more than once a day isn't healthy. But these beliefs are far from universal, even in our own society. "Many people who are labelled sexual addicts feel out of control," Klein said when I spoke with him recently. "But they confuse *feeling* out of control with *being* out of control. I happen to love chocolates, and if there's a box of chocolates in the room I feel out of control and I make a choice to eat chocolate, because I like it. That's not the same as being out of control."

Klein sees the sexual-addiction model as moralistic, arbitrary, misinformed, and narrow. "There is no sense of healthy pornography, healthy sadomasochism, healthy non-monogamy. It's not a question of right and wrong. The sexual-addiction model is a very limited one."

A concern of critics of the sexual-

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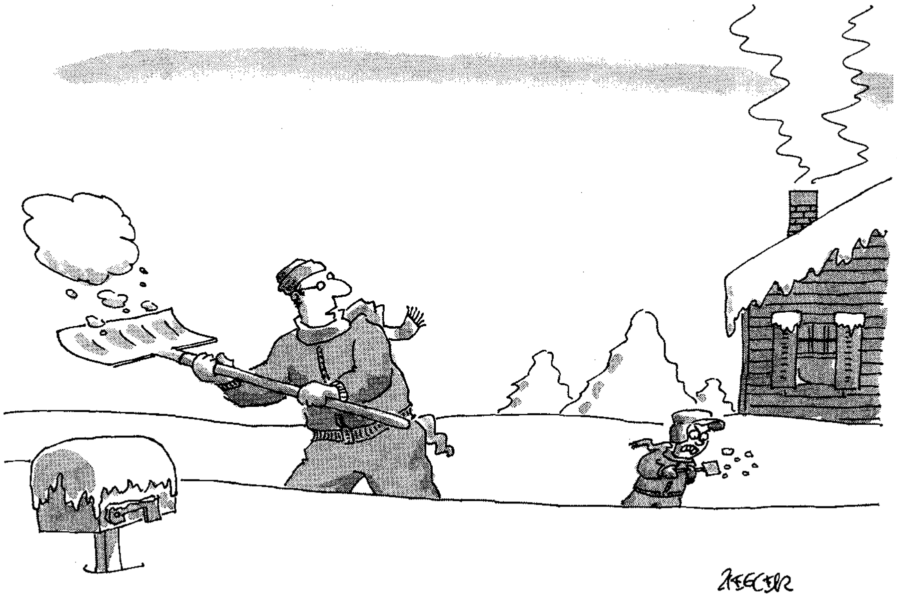

"It's a poor craftsman, son, who blames his tools."

• •

addiction model is how easily it plays into the hands of the right wing. In the mid-eighties, the climate created by the Meese Commission on Pornography and the activities of organizations such as the National Federation for Decency and Citizens Against Pornography, whose head claimed that "smut causes sex addiction," prompted 7-Eleven to stop selling *Playboy* and *Penthouse* in its stores. Klein fears that sexual addiction appears to provide a scientific basis for the intuitive belief that sex is dangerous. In his view, many of us feel some kind of shame about our sexuality—either about our overt behavior or about the more primitive urges and images left over from childhood. It is a shame that we seek to rid ourselves of. The behavioral symptoms that we are supposedly addicted to are just a symbol of that shame. We have walked this path before: sexual behavior seen as sin, and then sin being called a sickness; one has only to look at early psychiatry's work with homosexuality. "When you have a disease, the metaphor is different," Klein said to me. "The moral issues are less. We look down on a drunkard, but we have sympathy for the alcoholic. And when you have a disease, then the insurance industry gets in."

David undertook group and individual therapy in order to treat his sexual addiction. The goal of his treatment, he said, was thirty to ninety days of abstinence from all sexual activities, including masturbation, and then a gradual return to "normal" sex. When David returned to El Paso, he told me that he now tried to avoid all sexually explicit material. He said that he also had a "three-second" rule—that was the longest he allowed himself to focus on a sexual thought. Central to his recovery were local group meetings of fellow sex addicts. The new David was preoccupied with meetings and recovery in the same way that I imagine he had previously been preoccupied with sex. His meetings followed the A.A. format, with the substitution of the words "sex and love addiction" for "alcohol." His first step was therefore to admit that he was powerless over his sex and love addiction. We had been able to talk about everything, but it soon became awkward for us to talk about sex, or even joke about it. When I brought up the subject, I felt as if I were waving a whiskey flask under the nose of a recovering dipsomaniac.

Dr. Eli Coleman, in his thoughtful writings on the subject of compulsive sexual behavior—the term he prefers to "sexual addiction"—points out that restrictive or conservative attitudes toward sexuality may be a precursor to compulsive sexual behavior. If the traditional proscriptive treatment of a twelve-step program—abstinence—merely reinforces these attitudes, it may actually contribute to the compulsive behavior. Coleman is a professor and the director of the Program in Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and is also a member of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality. "It's interesting that we use the term 'compulsive gambling,' but when it comes to sex we speak of 'sexual addiction,'" Dr. Coleman said when I talked to him recently. "I think it's because of our tendency to take anything that is out of the ordinary sexually and give it a heavily laden label. 'Addiction' is an oversimplification of a complex phenomenon. The historical vestige of an addiction approach to sexual disorders is unfortunate. It helps, but in the approach is an implication that it is *the* way, as opposed to *a* way." Coleman points out that even if an individual's behavior is in conflict with the prevailing value system he may have a problem but not necessarily a compulsion.

Once, I told David that hitting on one of his fellow medical students was something that his girlfriend, whose patience was wearing thin, could not possibly approve of, and he blamed his sexual addiction. He could admit his addiction—but he believed that he had no power over his behavior. Klein and Coleman both think that the feeling of "powerlessness" is manageable, and that it can respond to psychological therapy or intervention. They believe that one's sexual behavior—unless the problem is compounded by a true obsessive-compulsive disorder or a mood disorder—is under one's control.

To find the "single switch at the center of things" would eliminate much of the controversy surrounding sexual disorders. If the billions of neurons in the brain are viewed as the "hardware" of the brain, then the "software" consists of the learning or memories that we accumulate. Behavior, or the software, has in this century been viewed as the territory of the psychiatrist or the psychologist. The discovery, in 1978, of naturally occurring chemicals—known as neurotransmitters—with morphinelike (or opioid) activity, was a remarkable development. These opioids (enkephalins and endorphins) are released from the tips of neurons to act on specific receptors on other neurons. The finding suggested that even psychological disorders must arise through chemical changes.

The prime target area for research is a teleologically older part of the brain, the medial forebrain bundle. This area is, in effect, a pathway for both reward and, possibly, punishment, and is acted on by natural opioids. The balance between opposing opioids probably determines one's state of mind, signalling "good," for example, when hunger and thirst are satisfied, or after a long, pleasurable run, or when a sexual act is consummated, and signalling "bad" when pain is experienced or when risky behavior is engaged in. Drugs such as Prozac act by altering the levels of discrete neurotransmitters, as do cocaine and LSD. But the precise biological substrate for compulsive sexual disorders—something that would distinguish them from non-compulsive behavior—has still to be defined. Yet, as Dr. Avram Goldstein, a pioneer in the discovery of neurotransmitters, has written, "it is not a question of psychology *versus* biology; on the contrary, in the final analysis (but our present knowledge falls far short) psychology *is* biology."

The prospect of a biological model—a twisted molecule behind every form of twisted behavior—is seductive. Eventually, perhaps, *DSM-V*, or one of its descendants, will categorize sexual disorders at the neurotransmitter level, in the same way that we now speak of "good" and "bad" cholesterol. But such a classification might merely reflect new attitudes in society: abnormal sexuality as a form of Prozac deficiency and a pill taking the place of a twelve-step program.

Such a questionable advance is many years away. Meanwhile, it seems to me dangerous to isolate someone's sexual behavior and to regard it as somehow apart from the rest of him. If another young doctor with as much promise as David were to tell me the same tale that David told me, I would find no satisfaction in applying the sexual-addiction label. At best, it would be an allegory rather than an explanation.

I remember how extraordinary it was to see David in full flow on the tennis court, how his impeccable timing on the backhand allowed him to take the ball on the rise and send it back on a laser path. It appeared to me, then and now, that no mere coming together of brain and muscle could fully explain this beauty. Is it an act of hubris to think that we can ever fully fathom human behavior? The tension between our old "reptilian" brain and our new brain, between our limbic system and our neocortex, between our primitive urges and our cognitive mind—all metaphors of our own invention—is at the essence of being human. Perhaps this is why we watch with such interest the behavior of others around us. We realize that in everyone we see ourselves. ♦

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

A CELEBRATION OF REAGAN

What the Presidential library reveals about the man.

BY EDMUND MORRIS

With the nation's capital airport rechristened in his honor, an immense new federal building chiselled with his name (so well-proportioned for Roman characters), and with serious threats to carve his likeness on Mt. Rushmore, Ronald Reagan is on his way to becoming the most monumentalized President in our history. Not bad for a man who so strangely combined modesty with what François Mitterrand called *la notion de l'état*, the sense of himself as the embodiment of the state.

Since 1991 he has already had all the memorial he personally wanted, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Center for Public Affairs in Simi Valley, California. Its mountaintop site is just far enough northwest of Los Angeles—about an hour's drive—to preserve an appropriate sense of peace and placidity, key ingredients of his own nature. Indeed, waves of Reaganesque restfulness seem to spread down the slopes into Simi Valley itself, a retirement community whose gardens are lavishly planted with lotos fruit.

These directions will enable you to find the library, if you should happen to take the wrong exit from 118, and end up on Rambling Road in the vicinity of Mellow Lane: Keep on Rambling until it becomes Nonchalant Drive. Alternatively, take Mellow through Cheerful, Genial, Quiet, and Peaceful Courts. Having attained Bliss, turn north past Leisure (Nonchalant traffic: head the same way), continue through two lights. Avoid Carefree, unless you want to explore Languid and Tranquil Lanes; neither, however, is more than an extension of Carefree. Watch for the big sign to Easy Street. Go down Easy one long block, swing left, and drive south for a couple of miles. When you find yourself in Country Club territory, do what Mr. Reagan did in 1962, and turn sharply right. Ascend the winding mountain road marked "Presidential Drive." Visitors arriving at the summit late in the afternoon may enjoy a fine view of the Sun Sinking Slowly in the West.

I enjoyed such a view myself the last time I saw Mr. Reagan at the library. We were upstairs in his private suite, "holding" before he would descend to open an exhibition of White House memorabilia. He stood between me and the sunset, big, broad, silhouetted, his pompadour on fire. Not long afterward, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and began his long, slow retreat. I see it now in terms of that image: a dark vignette reducing, memory headed toward immolation.

There is something Valhallan about Mr. Reagan's desire to be buried here, in a tomb of rose limestone that every sunset will redden, flanked by his own rhetorical weapons and piles of foreign treasure. If so, it is primarily the view that appealed to him. He has always had a cheery fatalism about death, buttressed by belief in the afterlife, so he took an active interest in the location of his crypt. It is carved out of the seaward slope of Library Mountain, which overlooks fold after fold of lesser hills disclosing, ultimately, the Pacific Ocean. On clear days, when the coast is not obscured by that brownish cloud he always insisted was "ozone," visibility extends as far as Santa Cruz Island, twenty miles offshore.

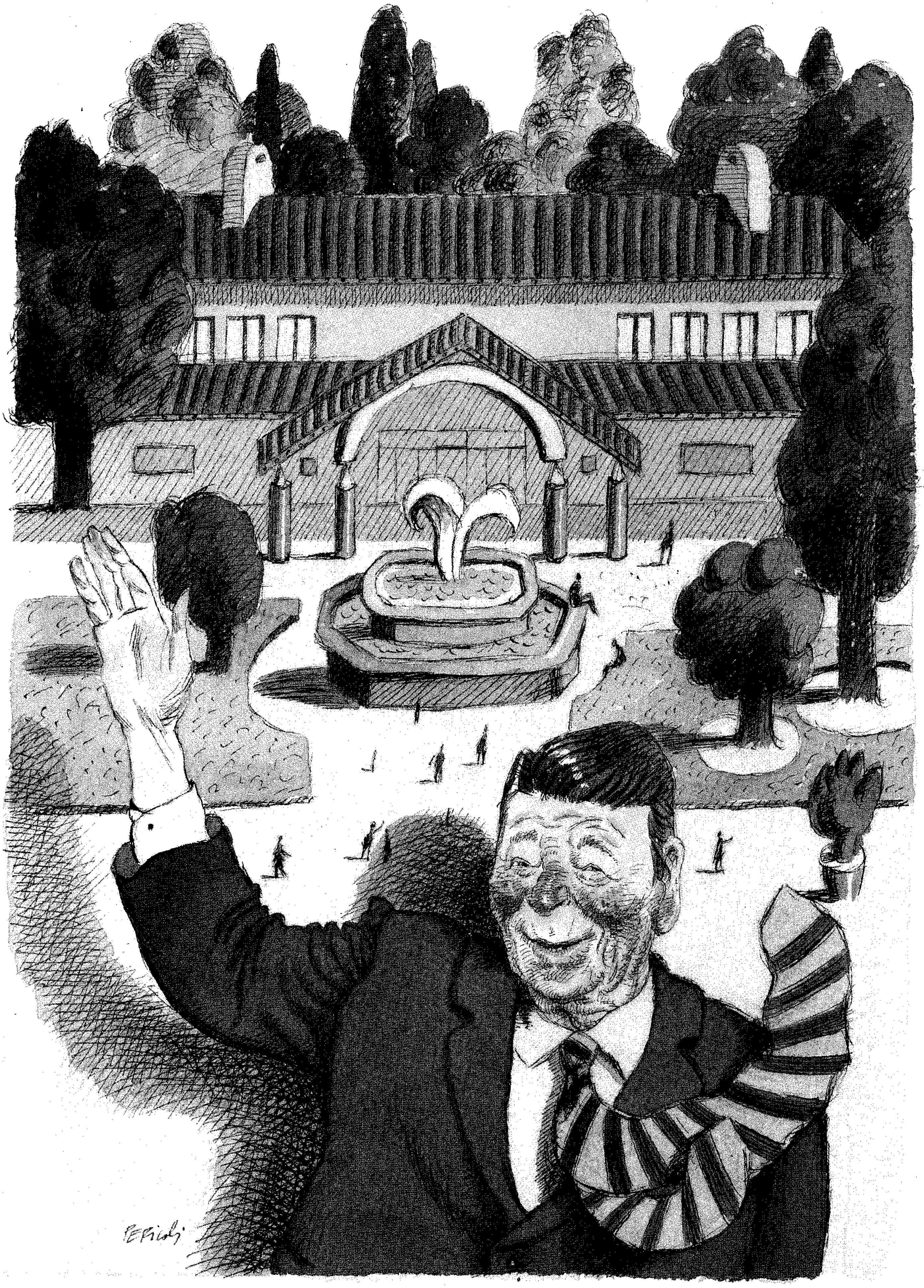
This is the panorama he looks forward to being able to contemplate at leisure when "they open that door in front and slide me in." A few feet of rail will carry his coffin to its terminus, and the steel plate will be sealed until he is joined by just one other person. "Then we'll lie there and look at the sea together."

Your first impression of the library, as you crest the hill, is of a Mission-style complex so low of roof and open of plan, with cloister and quadrangle and fountain, that it hardly looks like the largest such facility in the country. That is because its archival storage rooms, including the "national-security vault," lie underground, on two levels. The low roof shelters, on the south side of the quadrangle, the offices of National Archives personnel, whose responsibility is to process, store, and "reference" Mr. Reagan's personal and Presidential papers. These are quite voluminous: fifty million pages of documents, well over a million and a half still photographs, nearly eight hundred thousand feet of film, forty-five thousand videotapes and audio recordings, sixteen thousand books, and fifty-eight thousand periodicals.

All this raw material of future scholarship (most of the documents remain inaccessible, for security or processing reasons) is stored in climatological conditions ranging from alpine desert (for paper records) to northern steppe (for film negatives and prints). A more temperate research room, huge and luxurious and, often as not, empty, looks out on a hillside planted with olive trees and Mexican sage. Twenty-nine acres of the library complex belong to the National Archives; the seventy-one others are owned by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, which created the adjoining museum and runs the Ronald Reagan Center for Public Affairs.

The museum, on the northern side of the quadrangle, is the library's principal attraction, averaging a hundred and eighty thousand visitors a year. Last June, it sold its millionth ticket, to a gentleman in shorts from Florida. Even so, its popularity does not approach that of some of the ten other Presidential museums. The John F. Kennedy, in Boston, Massachusetts, drew two hundred and seventy thousand visitors last year, and the Lyndon B. Johnson, in

TULLIO PERICOLI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Austin, Texas, two hundred and fifty-four thousand. Mark Hunt, the current director of the Ronald Reagan, points out that those libraries are situated in major cities. Urban proximity, though, is no guarantee of better business. One of the least popular Presidential libraries, Jimmy Carter's, is surrounded by the teeming sprawl of Atlanta.

Above the central entrance lobby rises the only two-story part of the structure, devoted to a ceremonial suite for the Reagans, a conference room used by the board of trustees, and offices for the foundation. Mr. Reagan makes less use of his rooms than he used to (although he showed up unannounced last November, and did a grip-and-grin with some delighted schoolchildren), and the library has begun to conduct occasional special tours of their lavish appointments. The reception room, where the Reagans have entertained Mikhail Gorbachev, Margaret Thatcher, King Hussein of Jordan, and other dignitaries, is a motionless menagerie of bronze eagles and silver stallions. Tiny pools of resilient wax around their pedestals insure that they will remain fixed in the next earthquake. The last one's epicenter, at Northridge, was less than twenty miles away.

This evokes a macabre thought: what will happen if the mountain *really* jars after Mr. Reagan is dead, resting on his bed of rails? Let's hope that steel plate is strong.

WITHOUT question, the most beautiful and evocative object preserved here is a ten-foot-high, six-thousand-pound chunk of jagged concrete. It was given to Mr. Reagan by an East German group after Moscow finally heeded his great cry "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Pocked and gray on one side, spray-painted on the other with symbols of freedom (a pink butterfly ascendant, flowers and starbursts exploding out of a field of green), it stands with magnificent incongruousness on the library's western patio. To be truly symbolic, I suppose, it should present its gray face eastward, but that would spoil the impact as you walk out and see a joyous *schmetterling* floating over the fragrant California hills.

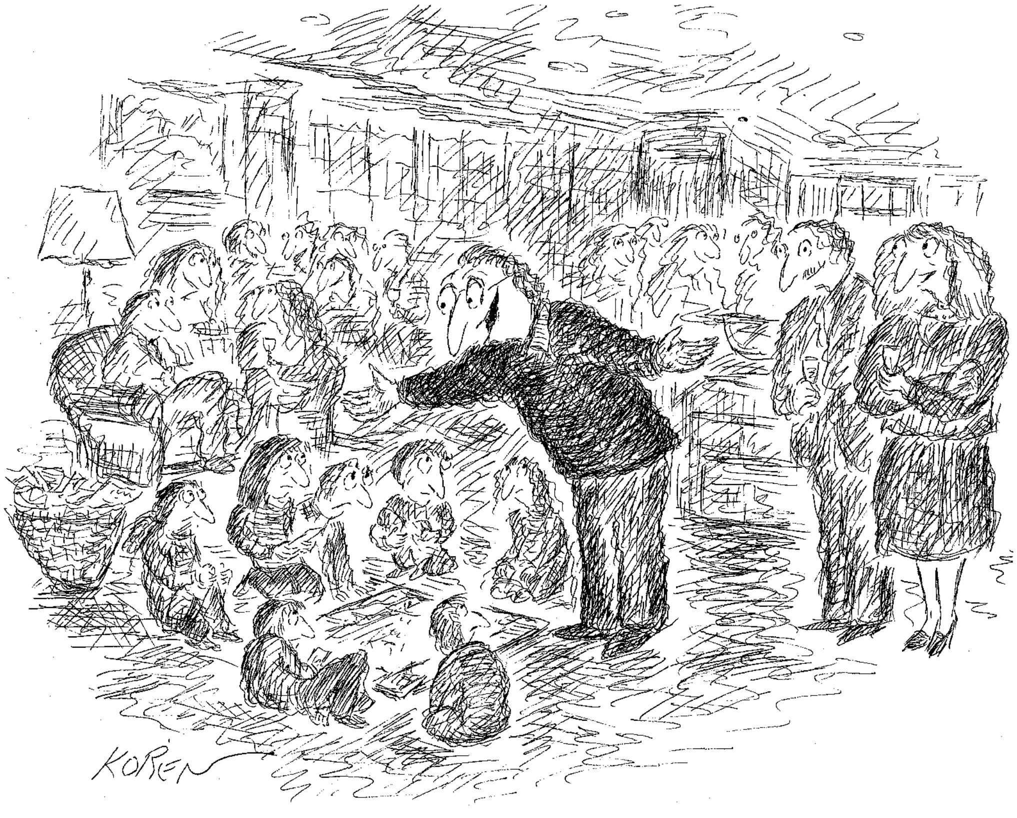
There is another lepidopteral object in the library, and it runs the Wall a pretty close second. I know that the following description may set off kitsch alarms all over Manhattan, but bear with me. It's a large head-and-shoulders portrait of the Gipper, done entirely in butterflies' wings. Every ripple of his glossy hair is a tiny blue-black fan, lustrous as silk. Panes of silver highlight his brows. The right side of his smiling face, bathed in more light than the left, is worked with amber *feuilles*, each of which shows a little "eye" of darker color, discreetly suggesting pores. His teeth are lozenges of palest ivory, matched by the scalloped whiteness of his shirt collar and handkerchief. And I recognize that suit as the splendid *bleu nuit* he wore when he met Gorbachev for the first time, although the original didn't have such darkling depths.

This intricate miracle of folk art was worked by craftsmen of the Central African Republic. It's just one of seventy-five thousand gifts lavished upon the Reagans during their eight years in power—gifts so prodigal that, if the library wants to, it can exhibit the butterfly portrait beside three others almost as fine, respectively done in lapis lazuli (Pakistan), seed beads (India), and jelly beans (our own more perishable civilization).

While on the subject of American aesthetics, I might mention a gift, also on display, that George and Barbara Bush presented to Mr. Reagan on his seventy-fifth birthday. I first saw it—or, rather, a duplicate of it—in the Vice-President's mansion, and heard an aggrieved complaint that it had been received without any expression of gratitude. It was a custom-made upholstered stool, embroidered with the American eagle *in loco centrali*, and standing on a pair of spurred Dehner riding boots just like the President's, the leather plumped as if his real legs were inside.

I heard a museum visitor say, without apparent irony, "Now, *that's* what I call a footstool."

PRESIDENTIAL libraries tend to be schizoid operations. They are supposed to reflect the statutory impartiality of the National Archives while catering to



"Bud has a great way with kids, but they don't know it."

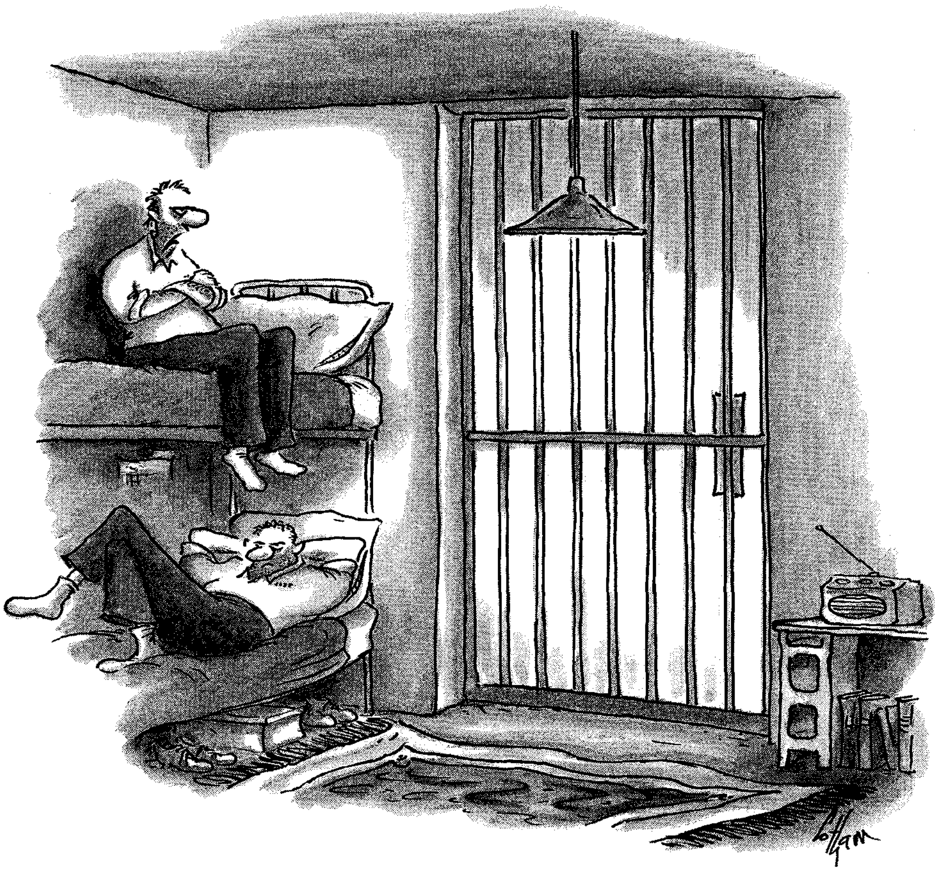
the sensibilities (and sensitivities) of the foundations that design the exhibition spaces and sponsor related promotional activities. The corridor leading to the Reagan Library research room, for example, is lined with some savage cartoons by Pat Oliphant, including one that shows Mr. Reagan's head being detonated by a maddened dynamiter.

Upstairs, the walls of the Ronald Reagan Center for Public Affairs are hung with portraits seemingly painted in holy oils, and the mood is one of hushed reverence. "Conservative, yes—partisan, no," allows Lynda Schuler, deputy director of the center, when she is asked about its attitude toward the scholarly presentations she organizes. California State Senator Tom Hayden has yet to receive an invitation to speak, but the foundation makes no effort to control the opinions of moderate liberals who come here to debate the likes of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Lyn Nofziger. On March 12th, Michael Dukakis will attend an all-day conference on "The Press and the Presidency," to be introduced by Tom Brokaw. Past lecturers and conferees have included former Secretary of State George Shultz; ABC correspondent Diane Sawyer; Alexander Yakovlev, the ideologist of glasnost; Brian Lamb of C-SPAN's "Booknotes"; and Lech Walesa, former President of Poland.

Mr. Walesa's 1996 remarks about contemporary Europe, while doubtless eloquent in Polish, were rendered by his translator with such sublime awkwardness as to attain a kind of poetry:

> No one has a clear idea, and some politicians behave just like an animal in the presence of a bigger and unknown beast. If it cannot run away, the animal tries to ignore it, hoping that the stranger will just do the same. The ostrich, in turn, solves this problem by hiding his head in the sand. If he does not see, or does not want to see, the threat, the danger does not exist. On a number of occasions, while participating in international meetings, I closed my eyes and I saw a flock of ostrich sitting at round tables, oval ones, square ones, and, in fact, tables of different forms.

Yet there could be no misinterpretation of the old shipyard worker's tersely eloquent tribute to Ronald Reagan: "We Poles owe him freedom."



"Why am I always the bad guy?"

• •

Another, even more moving invocation of liberty was made here on the library's Dedication Day, November 4, 1991. All five living Presidents attended. One might have expected Mr. Reagan to be the center of attention, but it was Pat Nixon who drew the most eyes. On the high platform, under the baking sun, she looked so old and ill that many of us feared she might fall off. I sat looking at her ravaged face and thought, Woodward and Bernstein should be here to check out their handiwork.

Richard Nixon, true to form, ignored her. He sat glowering until his turn came to speak, then stepped to the microphone and gave a short, masterly speech. It ended:

> Thirty-two years ago, in Moscow, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev jabbed his finger into my chest and said, "Your grandchildren will live under Communism." I replied, "*Your* grandchildren will live in freedom."
>
> At that time, I was sure he was wrong. I was not sure I was right. Now we know. Thanks in part to the strong and idealistic leadership of President Reagan [*a shake of the jowls toward the dedicatee*], Khrushchev's grandchildren now live in freedom.

With that he swivelled on his heel and returned to his seat. What the other Presidents said I can barely remember. Nixon Agonistes had triumphed again, reminding us in words almost as simple as Walesa's that the Cold War really was over.

But then he had to go and act like a boor. Mrs. Nixon announced after the ceremony that she was too ill to stay for lunch, so he furiously called for their limousine. When it drew up, he got in the near door, leaving her to totter around to the other side.

I REVISITED the museum last month and found its vestibular gallery being readied for a show of paintings by Grandma Moses. Unfortunately, the old primitive's delicate yet tensile-tough compositions will hang there only through March 15th, for they make an appropriate induction to the first part of the permanent display, devoted to Ronald Reagan's early years in Illinois. The world of Grandma Moses was that of his mother, and thus, by extension, his own: simple, strict but not stern, cramped in perspective, colored with a protective sentimentality. His father's binge alcoholism is not mentioned in this display, but the omission somehow seems historically right. God-fearing Midwestern folk were not supposed to "notice" such things in the teens and early twenties. Weakness, madness, adultery—all must be swept under the rug of decorum, just as Grandma swept industrial ugliness out of frame, out of mind.

As you stand looking at a photograph of seventeen-year-old Dutch in football togs, too lightweight to be considered for the Eureka squad, that unmistakable silky baritone breathes in your ears, "I still couldn't say aloud, even to myself, that I wanted to be an actor." The museum takes full audio advantage of Mr. Reagan's prowess as a reader, and although there are times when you wish he (or the speaker system) would shut up, the net result is of a constant, benign presence, unseen yet powerfully felt. I don't know if it was deliberate policy to have him record some of the later tapes in his old, roughened voice, but the effect of encroaching age is poignant.

A more subtle and scholarly influence is that of the historian Richard Norton Smith, who was appointed director of the Reagan Library in 1994 and saw at once that the museum was too hagiographical. He was disturbed not only by what a visiting British journalist called the "tear-jerking homeyness and gob-smacking richesse" of some of the displays but by a poverty of imagination. Feeling that the facts of Mr. Reagan's life and work were impressive enough to speak for themselves, he revised much of the display text and the audiovisual scripts so as not to insult the curiosity of intelligent patrons.

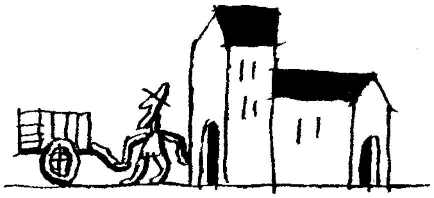
He was, however, unable to do anything about the museum's most obvious dereliction. Only eight and a half by ten inches of its fifteen thousand square feet of exhibit space are devoted to the first Mrs. Reagan. (A biographical sheet put out by the library declines even to name Jane Wyman, alluding only to "a previous marriage.") So much for the woman who shared his life for seven years, bore him not one but two daughters (the second, delivered prematurely, lived just a day), and joined him in adopting a son to perpetuate the Reagan name. Unquestionably, their divorce was painful to him, and everybody knows that his second marriage, five times as long, has been happier and more productive. But until the museum can devote at least a cabinet to Miss Wyman, to balance the whole gallery accorded Nancy Reagan, it can never call itself a mature institution.

No such reticence is discernible in the areas chronicling Mr. Reagan's successful governorship of California (1967-75) and Jimmy Carter's rather less successful tenure as President (1977-81). Proliferating images of gasoline lines, urban wastelands, factory trashings, hostage humiliations, and double-digit misery indices remind us how things were in the era of malaise. Over and over, thanks to automatic replay, we see the Gipper triumphantly whipping the President in debate on October 28, 1980 ("There you go again"), not to mention Walter Mondale four years later ("I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent's youth and inexperience").

If I may make a suggestion to the museum's curators, they should borrow from the archives an Oliphant cartoon of a Mondale-like figure completely flattened under the treads of the Reagan juggernaut. The caption asks, "Anybody got any use for a thin, wide liberal?"

In the next gallery, Mr. Reagan's black-and-pearl morning clothes, worn just once, on January 20, 1981, are as evocative of a new national dignity as George Washington's plainer swearing-in suit, preserved in Federal Hall. The most elegant Inauguration in American history ushered in, overnight, an era in which the Pursuit of Happiness was finally allowed to revoke the Presumption of Entitlement.

However passé the pomp of that ceremony may seem now that Presidential style has got dull again, surely no museum visitor can view the exhibit of Mr. Reagan's subsequent brush with death and not find him to be, in essence, the simplest and bravest of men. A push button flashes the familiar images of the gun coming in from right screen, the raised arm, the big body being slammed into the waiting limousine. An X-ray blowup, as otherworldly as any NASA image, shows the ballistic spaceship Devastator drifting whitely above the black hole of his heart. And it is difficult to read without emotion the President's shaky notes, scribbled to nurses when tubes blocked his throat: "I am aren't alive aren't I?" "What happened to the guy with the gun?" "Could we rewrite this scene beginning about the time I left the hotel?"



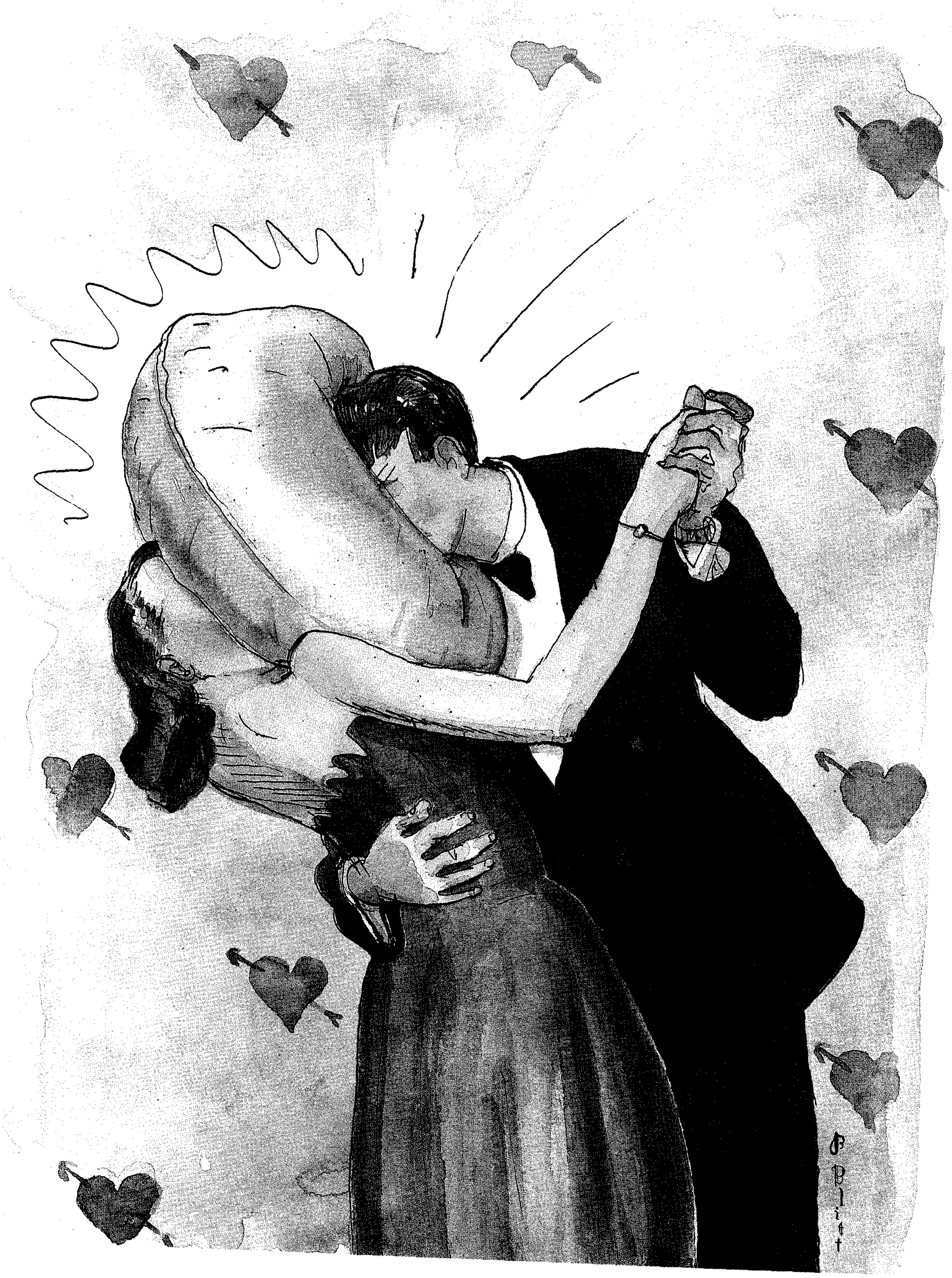
Moving on through the galleries and theatres that tell the story of the next eight years (including an honest, if hasty, account of Iran-Contra), one carries in mind an awareness of how nearly his would-be assassin, John Hinckley, Jr., succeeded in delaying the end of the Cold War. I do not see an accidental President Bush calling Gorbachev's bluff at Reykjavik. That shot at the heart gave Mr. Reagan a sense of theocratic certainty that he had been spared to negotiate the end of the nuclear age. We read in an extract from his diary, "Whatever happens now, I owe my life to God."

The museum's most popular room, which can be entered, though not circumnavigated, is a full-size replica of the Oval Office, so realistic that the five Presidents were clearly taken aback when they stopped by on Dedication Day. Mr. Reagan visits it from time to time, and one can only hope that he retains some vague notion of having distinguished himself here.

I GENERALLY avoid the museum and its high sugar content, feeling more at home in the acid-free environment of the research room. Here the raw materials of the past—or, at least, its paper and film representations—are preserved with exemplary care. (A cross-reference in my research file notes that, just as the Reagan Library clicked into flawless operation six years ago, the Lenin Library, in Moscow, was moldering into decay.) Although the legislators who drew up the Presidential Records Act of 1978 appear to have been spiritually de-

SKETCHBOOK BY BARRY BLITT

SAFE SEX



scended from that old bat who guarded the papers of Charles Foster Kane, archivists here are eager to make available what they can. Anybody with a serious interest can sign up to use the collection, and the open materials are not unrewarding.

Everything processed in response to recent Freedom of Information Act requests is by definition in the public domain. Depending on your mood, you may study, for example, twelve hundred and thirty-four pages of Reagan Administration documents on the effects of a nuclear winter; fifty-six hundred and seventy-four pages of memoranda and drafts to do with the President's speeches on the "Evil Empire," "Star Wars," Lebanon/Grenada, Reykjavik, and Iran-Contra; and thirty-two hundred and seventy-six pages on Senator Alfonse D'Amato.

Among eight million other pages that can be "pulled" at the flick of a call slip are those to do with Agriculture, Arts, Civil Aviation, Education, Federal Aid, Highways, Housing, Indian Affairs, Local Government, Natural Resources, Outer Space, and Religious Matters. Mr. Reagan, I think, would have been inclined to merge the last two subjects, but federal cataloguers have never been big on metaphysics. Their instinct when confronted by archival disorder is to group and divide and subdivide. Before you fill out your slip, you have to ponder a few advisories like this:

> WHORM SUBJECT FILE, 1981-89 (2,488 feet)
>
> The Subject File is the most important segment of the WHORM file systems. It is comprised of sixty primary subject categories that are divided into over 3,000 secondary categories (using alphanumeric file codes) and over 650,000 case files (identified by a six digit numeric code). Of the sixty primary categories, fifty-eight are presidential records or primarily presidential records. The contents of the remaining two categories, Political Affairs (PL) and Presidential Personal (PP), are designated as the personal papers of the President. . . . The Subject File also has two satellite files, the Confidential File (116 feet) and Oversize Attachments (1,050 feet).

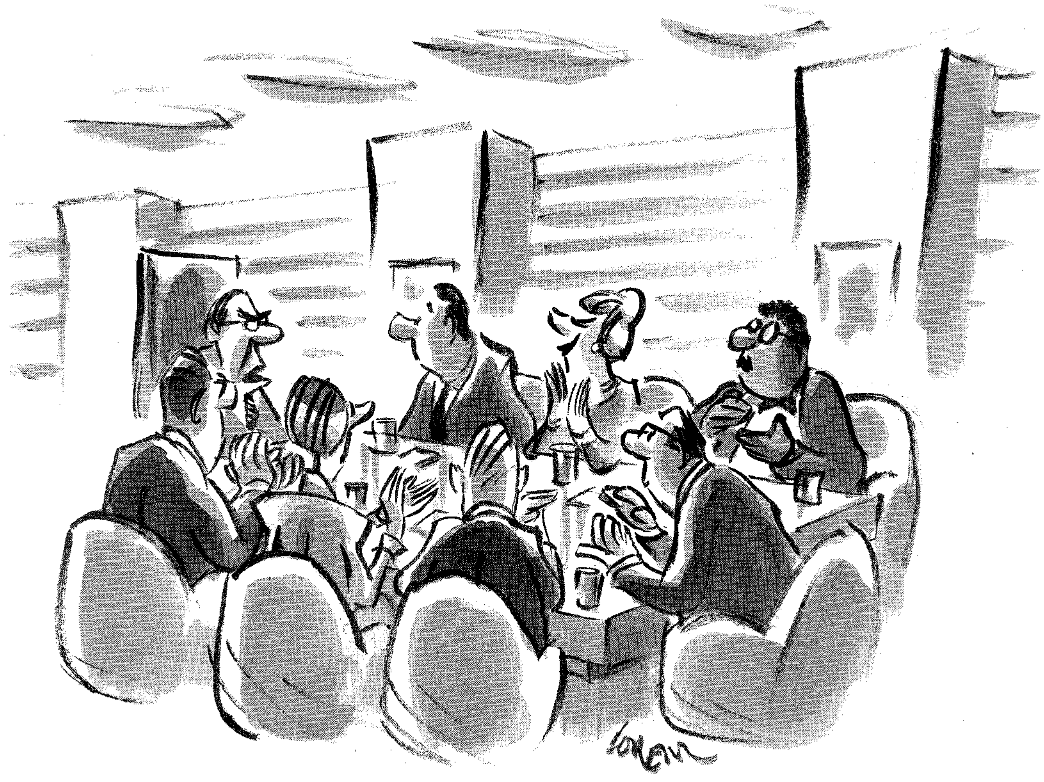
All very well, as Bertie Wooster would groan, but not the kind of thing to spring on a lad with a light head too early in the morning.

That being said, there is for a researcher no sight more pleasant than that of a truckload of gray boxes advancing toward one's polished-oak table, filled with who knows how many potential Rosebuds. Mr. Reagan has kept his sled well hidden, but one opens each fresh box in the hope of—well, something. And once or twice a day, on a good day, something indeed pops up. One's best luck is usually in folders labelled "Miscellaneous."

Many biographers, I think, will attest to the almost electromagnetic mystery whereby atoms of related subject matter seek one another out in archival chaos, coalesce, and begin to radiate meaning. Beyond number, beyond the alphabet and the calendar, lie what D. H. Lawrence called "the leavings of a life"—scraps, stubs, notes, doodles, rough drafts, unidentified photographs, cryptic souvenirs. Like bits of shell along the shoreline, they wink their fragmentary messages, some sharp, some iridescent, one or two possibly precious. And, because the mystery operates independently of time and space, these messages are often enigmatic in themselves. One has to keep walking, watching for similar flashes, to infer—with luck—a whole shell from the general sand.

PERHAPS the richest deposit of historical material in the Reagan Library lies in its audiovisual collection, managed by a thick-blooded young man named Steve Branch. He needs the thick blood, because he is forever darting in and out of refrigerated vaults in pursuit of videocassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, and photographic positives and negatives, not to mention a million and a half shots of the daily activities of the President and Mrs. Reagan.

The most rewarding segment, to my mind, is a trove of films and videotapes made by the White House Television Office, again recording the President's daily activities. Virtually every notable visitor to the Oval Office was trailed by a WHTV crew, toting shouldercams and a sound boom. Although discretion compelled them to retire after



"It's been moved and seconded, Cartwright, that we clap if we believe in fairies."

I'VE BEEN AROUND; IT GETS ME NOWHERE

Cuncta fui; conducit nihil.
—*V. Aurelius*

I am the woman always too young to be
holding the diamond the baby exulting.

I am the worker afraid of the rules & the boss; my
salary heats the house where I feed many children.

I am packing my bags for coming & going
& going much further than ever before.

Though elsewhere gets me nowhere
place is not a problem.
Feet keep me going,
the impressive exporters
of what place is about. Maps—
gold on parchment or printed
Mobil travel ads—lay it all out.

But over every place, time goes
remote, a cloud-cover question.
You, in love with your castle, your jet,
your well-invested dollars,
and I with my moving
dictionaries & binoculars
are both almost out of it,
too far gone to find a bin
with stores of more time in.
A decade, a week, a second, then
time shrugs and shudders out of touch
into a perfect fit,
and that's it.

I am the dog I let out in the morning
wagging & panting at the open door.

I am the foresworn child in the swing
arching & pumping, practicing: "More, more!"

I'm the crossword puzzle time & place
bound at the end by their loose embrace.

—Marie Ponsot

the first few moments of politesse, there is something delightfully voyeuristic about seeing Mr. Reagan affect pleasure at the sight of House Speaker Jim Wright, or rise in courteous self-defense before the advancing barbed-wire roll of Margaret Thatcher's hair style.

Wherever he travelled, WHTV would follow, cranking away. And, since the unit operated with considerably more freedom than the press pool, it was permitted "photo opportunities" that network lensers would kill for. The other day, Mr. Branch played me some raw video taken inside the Vatican Palace on June 7, 1982, as Pope John Paul II introduced the President to a delegation of young priests. With complete spontaneity, first *a due* and then all, *a cappella*, the clerics break into a chorus of "America the Beautiful." What would be hokey at, say, the Illinois State Fair sounds overwhelmingly touching when it is sung in accented voices beneath gilt Renaissance arches.

On outdoor occasions in winter weather, the WHTV crew would sometimes set up the camera and let it roll indiscriminately while they went off in search of coffee. As a result, the Reagan Library preserves a stretch of tape taken outside Villa La Gondole during the 1985 Geneva summit which achieves the disembodied magic of a sequence by Antonioni.

Night has fallen, and in the freezing air the surrounding woods are black and brooding. Inside, representatives of the Swiss government are waiting for the arrival of President Reagan's motorcade. The only sound is the occasional sniff of somebody offscreen. A light mist rises from the ground, vaguely phosphorescent. All at once, a blue light winks through the trees. It winks again, and continues winking as other lights follow, white and gold, half dissolved in the mist. The luminous chain approaches, still in silence, until the trees part and sedan after beflagged sedan cruises slowly into view. The sense of state, of majestic mass movement, is thrilling, and no less so because this marvellous footage is unstudied.

You can request it as WHTV-MT No. 119.

Before leaving the Reagan Library the other day, I went out onto the patio and leaned on the gate that denies access to the tomb. I swigged a cup of coffee and watched a perfect sunset bathe stone, grass, and sagebrush in a spectral glow. Small birds jerked and twittered in the olive trees. The air smelled of distant sea. To the north, the Santa Paula Range rippled like overlapping lines of watercolor. Not a bad view to lie looking at for the next thousand years or so.

Behind me I heard the dread squeak of Reeboks. A large lady joined me at the gate and gazed at the tomb. For a while she chewed gum contentedly, while I braced for the inevitable bromide.

"So," she said. "This is where they're buried." ♦

OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

BATTLE ACTS

The Civil War mania that has made weekend war games a national pastime.

BY TONY HORWITZ

IN 1965, a century after Appomattox, the Civil War began for me in a musty apartment in New Haven, Connecticut. My great-grandfather, leaning far over in his chair, held a magnifying glass to his spectacles and studied an enormous book spread open on the rug. Peering over his arm, I saw pen-and-ink soldiers hurtling up at me with bayonets. I was six, Poppa Isaac a hundred and one. Egg-bald, barely five feet tall, he lived so frugally that he cut cigarettes in half before smoking them. An elderly relative later told me that Poppa Isaac had bought the book of Civil War sketches soon after immigrating to America, in 1882.

Years later, I realized what was odd about this one vivid memory that I had of my great-grandfather Isaac Moses Perski. He had fled tsarist Russia as a teen-age draft dodger and arrived at Ellis Island without money or English or family. He had worked in a Lower East Side sweatshop and lived literally on peanuts. Why, I wondered, had this thrifty refugee chosen as one of his first purchases in America a book in a language he could barely understand, about a war in a land he barely knew, and why had he kept poring over that book until his death, at a hundred and two?

By the time Poppa Isaac died, my father had begun reading aloud to me each night from a photographic history of the Civil War: page after page of sepia men leading sepia horses across cornfields and creeks; jaunty volunteers, their faces framed by squished caps and fire-hazard beards; barefoot Confederates sprawled in trench mud, their eyes open and their limbs twisted like licorice. The fantastical creatures of Maurice Sendak held little magic compared to the man-boys of Mathew Brady who stared at me across the century that separated their life from mine.

Before long, I began to read aloud with my father, chanting the names of wondrous rivers like Shenandoah, Rappahannock, and Chickahominy, and wrapping my tongue around the risible names of Rebel generals such as Braxton Bragg, Jubal Early, John Sappington Marmaduke, William (Extra Billy) Smith, and Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard. I learned about palindromes from the surname of the Southern sea captain Raphael Semmes. And I began to match Brady's still-deaths with the stutter of farm roads and rocks that formed the photographer's backdrops: Mule Shoe, Bloody Lane, Devil's Den.

I also began painting the walls of our attic with a lurid narrative of the war: rebel soldiers at Antietam stretched from the stairs to the window. General Pickett and his men charged bravely into the eaves. The attic became my bedroom, and each morning I woke to the sound of my father bounding up the attic stairs, blowing a mock bugle call through his fingers and shouting, "General, the troops await your command!"

TWENTY-FIVE years later, early one winter morning, the Civil War reëntered my life with the sound of gunfire outside my house in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I looked out and saw men in gray uniforms firing muskets on the road. Then a woman popped up from behind a stone wall and yelled "Cut!" The firing stopped, and the Confederates collapsed in our yard. It turned out that our village had been chosen as the set for a TV documentary on Fredericksburg, an 1862 battle fought partly along Colonial-built streets that resembled ours. But the men weren't professional actors, and they were performing for little or no pay. "We do this sort of thing most weekends anyway," said a lean Rebel with gunpowder smudges on his face and the felicitous name of Troy Cool.

I'd often read in the local paper about "reënactors" who gathered by the thousands on spring and summer weekends to re-create Civil War battles using smoke bombs and reproduction muskets. This fast-growing hobby now had an estimated forty thousand adherents, whose ranks had gone beyond mock soldiers to include nurses, surgeons, preachers, even embalmers. Cool and his comrades explained that they weren't average reënactors—a term that they spoke with obvious distaste. Rather, they thought of themselves as "hard cores"—purists who sought absolute fidelity to the eighteen-sixties: the era's homespun clothing, antique speech, sparse diet, and simple utensils. Strictly followed, this fundamentalism produced a time-travel high, or what hard cores called a "period rush."

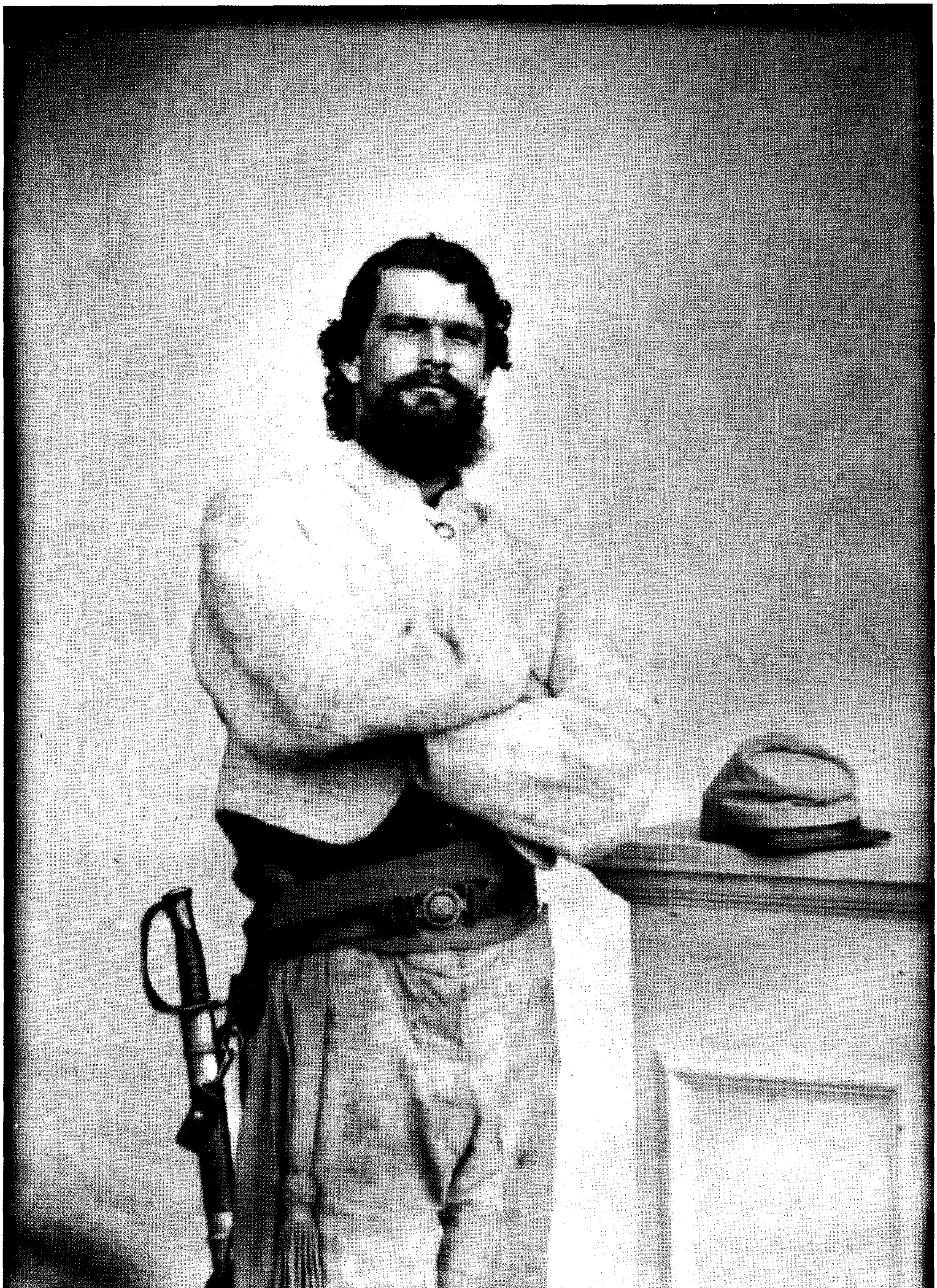
"Look at these buttons," one soldier said, fingering his gray wool jacket. "I soaked them overnight in a saucer filled with urine." The chemicals oxidized the brass, giving it the patina of buttons from the eighteen-sixties. "My wife woke up this morning, sniffed the air, and said, 'Tim, you've been peeing on your buttons again.' "

In the field, the hard cores ate only foods that Civil War soldiers ate, such as hardtack and salt pork. And they limited their speech to mid-nineteenth-century dialect and topics. "You don't talk about 'Monday Night Football,' " Tim explained. "You curse Abe Lincoln or say things like 'I wonder how Becky's getting on back at the farm.' "

The men paused to point out a hard core named Robert Lee Hodge who was ambling down the road toward us. Hodge looked as though he had stepped from a Civil War tintype: tall, rail-thin, with a long, pointed beard and a frayed and filthy uniform the color of butternut.

As he drew near, Troy Cool called out, "Rob, do the bloat!" Hodge clutched his stomach and crumpled to the ground. His belly swelled grotesquely, his hands

PHOTO BY CLAUDE LEVET/COURTESY ROBERT LEE HODGE



Robert Lee Hodge in authentic Confederate dress: "We're all GQ fashion snobs when it comes to Civil War gear."

curled, his cheeks puffed out, his mouth was contorted in a rictus of pain and astonishment. It was a flawless counterfeit of the bloated corpses photographed at Antietam and Gettysburg which I'd so often stared at as a child. For Hodge, it was also a way of life. He told me that he acted in Civil War movies and frequently posed—dead or alive—for painters and photographers who reproduced Civil War subjects and techniques. "I go to the National Archives a lot to look at the Civil War photographs," he said. "You can see much more detail in the original pictures than you can in books." Hodge reached into his haversack and, to my surprise, handed me a business card. "You should come out with us sometime and see what a period rush feels like," he said. I glanced at the card. It was Confederate gray; the phone number ended in 1865.

When I called Rob Hodge, a few weeks later, he renewed his offer to take me out in the field. The Southern Guard, the unit Hodge belonged to, was about to hold a drill to keep its skills sharp during the long winter layoff. "It'll be forty-eight hours of hard-core marching," he said. "Wanna come?"

Hodge gave me the number for the Guardsman who would serve as the host of the event—a Virginia farmer named Robert Young. I called Young for directions and asked him what to bring. "You'll be issued a bedroll and other kit as needed," Young said. "Bring food, but nothing modern. Absolutely no plastic." I put on old-fashioned, one-piece long johns, a pair of faded button-fly jeans, muddy work boots, and a rough cotton shirt that a hippie girlfriend had given me twenty years before. I tossed a hunk of cheese and a few apples into a leather shoulder bag, along with a rusty canteen and a camping knife.

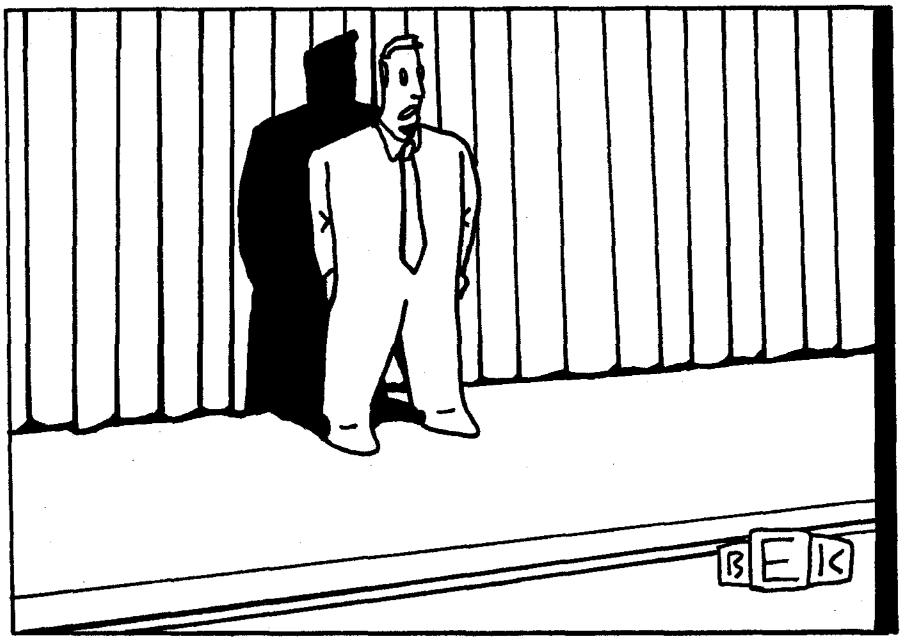
Two young Confederates stood guard at the entrance to the drill site, a four-hundred-acre farm in the bucolic horse country of the Virginia Piedmont. One was my host, Robert Young. He welcomed me with a curt nod and a full-body frisk for twentieth-century contraband. The apples, he said, had to go, because they were flawless Granny Smiths—nothing like the mottled fruit of the eighteen-sixties. The knife and the canteen and the shoulder bag were also deemed too pristine, and so was my entire wardrobe. Even the union suit was wrong: long johns in the eighteen-sixties were two-piece, not one.

In exchange, Young tossed me scratchy wool trousers, a filthy shirt, hobnailed boots, a jacket tailored for a Confederate midget, and wool socks that smelled as though they hadn't been washed since Second Manassas. Then he reached for my tortoiseshell glasses. "The frames are modern," he explained, and he handed me a pair of wire-rimmed spectacles with tiny, weak lenses. Finally, he threw a thin blanket over my shoulders. "We'll probably be spooning tonight," he said.

Spooning? His manner didn't invite questions. Half blind, and hobbled by the ill-fitting brogans, I trailed him to a farm building behind the antebellum mansion that I'd seen from the road. We sat shivering inside, waiting for the others. Unsure about the ground rules for conversation, I asked my host, "How did you become a reënactor?"

He grimaced. I'd forgotten that the "r" word was distasteful to hard cores. "We're living historians," he said. "Or historical interpreters, if you like." The Southern Guard had formed the year before as a schismatic faction, he said, breaking away from a unit that had too many "farbs."

"Farb" was the worst insult in the hard-core vocabulary. It referred to reënactors who approached the past with a lack of verisimilitude. The word's etymology was obscure; Young guessed that "farb" was short for "far be it from authentic" or, possibly, an anagram of "barf." Violations serious enough to earn the slur included wearing a wristwatch, smoking cigarettes, smearing oneself with sunblock or insect repellent, or—worst of all—fake blood. "Farb" was a fungible word: it could become an adjective ("farby"), a verb ("Don't farb out on me"), an adverb ("farbily"), and a heretical school of thought ("farbism") or behavior ("farbiness"). The Southern Guard remained vigilant against even accidental farbiness; it had formed an "authenticity committee" to research subjects such as underwear buttons and eighteen-sixties dyes.



"Tonight's performance has been cancelled because the star of our show has decided that musicals are stupid."

Rob Hodge arrived, and greeted his comrades with a pained grin. A few days before, he'd been dragged by a horse while playing Nathan Bedford Forrest in a cable-TV show about the Rebel cavalryman. The accident had left Rob with three cracked ribs, a broken toe, and a hematoma on his tibia. "I wanted to go on a march down in Louisiana," Rob told us, "but the doctor said it would mess up my leg so bad that it might even have to be amputated."

"Super hard-core!" the others shouted in unison. As the room filled, with twenty or so men greeting each other with hugs and shouts, it became obvious that there would be little attempt to maintain period dialogue. Instead, the gathering took on a peculiar cast:

part frat party, part fashion show, and part Weight Watchers meeting.

"Yo, look at Joel!" someone shouted as a tall, wasp-waisted Guardsman arrived. Joel twirled at the center of the room, sliding out of his gray jacket like a catwalk model. Then, reaching into his hip-hugging trousers, he raised his cotton shirt.

"Check out those abs!"

"Mmm."

"Awesome jacket. What's the cut?"

"Type One, early to mid '62, with piping," Joel said. "Cotton-and-wool jean. Stitched it myself."

"Way cool!"

Rob Hodge turned to me and said, "We're all *GQ* fashion snobs when it comes to Civil War gear."

"*CQ*," Joel corrected. "*Confederate Quarterly.*"

The two men embraced, and Rob said approvingly, "You've dropped some weight."

Joel smiled. "Fifteen pounds just in the last two months. I had a pizza yesterday but nothing at all today."

Losing weight was a hard-core obsession. Because Confederate soldiers were especially lean, it was every Guardsman's dream to drop a few pants sizes in order to achieve the gaunt, hollow-eyed look of underfed Rebels. Joel, a construction worker, had lost eighty-five pounds in the past year. "The Civil War's over, but the Battle of the Bulge never ends," he said, offering Rob a Pritikin recipe for skinless breast of chicken. At the encampment, there was no food—lo-cal or otherwise—in sight. Instead, the men puffed at corncob pipes and took swigs from antique jugs filled with Miller Lite.

Near midnight, we hiked a few hundred yards to our bivouac spot, in a moonlit orchard. My breath clouded in the frigid air. The thin wool blanket I'd been issued seemed hopelessly inadequate, and I wondered aloud how we'd avoid waking up resembling one of Rob Hodge's impressions of the Confederate dead. "Spooning," Joel said. "Same as they did in the war."

The Guardsmen stacked their muskets and unfurled ground cloths. "Sardine time," Joel said, flopping to the ground and pulling his coat and blanket over his chest. One by one, the others lay down as well, packed close, as if on a slave ship. I shuffled to the end of the clump, lying a few feet from the nearest man.

"They thought a wire-free party would put everyone at ease."

• •

"Spoon right!" someone shouted. Each man rolled onto his side and clutched the man beside him. I snuggled against my neighbor. A few bodies down, a man wedged between Joel and Rob began griping. "You guys are so skinny you don't give off any heat," he said. "You're just sucking it out of me!"

After fifteen minutes, someone shouted "Spoon left!" and the pack rolled over. Now my back was warm but my front was exposed to the chill air. I was in the "anchor" position, my neighbor explained—the coldest spot in a Civil War spoon.

Somewhere in the distance, a horse snorted. Then one of the soldiers let loose a titanic fart. "You farb!" his neighbor shouted. "Gas didn't come in until World War One!"

This prompted a volley of off-color jokes, most of them aimed at girlfriends and spouses.

"You married?" I said to my neighbor, a man about my own age.

"Uh-huh. Two kids." I asked how his family felt about his hobby, and he said, "If it wasn't this, it'd be golf or something." He propped himself up on one elbow and lit a cigar butt from an archaic box labelled "Friction Matches." "At least there's no room for jealousy with this hobby. You come home stinking of gunpowder and sweat and bad tobacco, so your wife knows you've just been out with the guys."

The chat died down. Someone got up to pee, walked into a tree branch, and cursed. One man kept waking himself and others with a hacking cough. And I realized that I should have taken off my wet boots before lying down; they'd become blocks of ice. My neighbor, Paul, was still half awake, and I asked him what he did when he wasn't freezing to death in the Virginia hills. "Finishing my Ph.D. thesis," he muttered. "On Soviet history."

I finally lulled myself to sleep with drowsy images of Stalingrad, and awoke to find my body molded tightly around Paul's, all awkwardness gone in the desperate search for warmth. He was doing the same to the man beside him. There must have been a "Spoon right!" in the night.

A moment later, someone banged on a pot and shouted reveille: "Wake the fuck up! It's late!" The sky was still gray. It was not yet six o'clock. No one showed any sign of making breakfast; instead, the Guardsmen formed tidy ranks, muskets perched on shoulders. As a first-timer, I was told to watch rather than take part. One of the men, acting as drill sergeant, began barking orders. "Company right, wheel, march! Ranks thirteen inches apart!" The men wheeled and marched across the orchard, their cups and canteens clanking like cowbells. In the early-morning light, their muskets and bayonets cast long, spirelike shadows. "Right oblique, march! Forward, march!"

The mood was sober and martial—except for one hungover soldier, who fell out of line and clutched a tree, vomiting.

"Super hard-core!" his comrades yelled.

ROB HODGE called a month later to tell me that the first major event of the "campaign season" was coming up: the Battle of the Wilderness. Eight thousand reënactors were expected to attend, plus twice that number of spectators. "It'll be a total farbfest," Rob predicted. Hard cores, he said, were ambivalent about battle reënactments. After all, it wasn't easy to be truly authentic when the most decisive moment of any battle—the killing of one's enemy—couldn't be reproduced. Hard cores also felt that crowds of spectators interfered with an authentic experience of combat. But Rob planned to go anyway, to scout fresh talent for his unit.

The day before the reënactment, Rob dropped by to lend me some gear, which included a "trans-Mississippi shell jacket" and a smooth-sided 1858 canteen. "With this kit," he said, "people will think you're hard core even if you act like a total farb." We made a plan to meet at the farm where the reënactment was scheduled to take place.

The real Battle of the Wilderness was fought in jungly Virginia woods in May, 1864. Lee slammed into Grant's advancing Army, hoping that surprise and the tangled terrain would disorient his far more numerous foe. Units of both Armies got lost and the woods caught fire, cremating many of the wounded. Grant lost seventeen thousand men, twice as many as Lee. But the North could bear such losses better than the South, and Grant pressed on, waging the grisly war of attrition that led to Lee's surrender at Appomattox the next spring.

Today's Civil War "battles" were easier to navigate. After driving across the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers, I spotted a roadside placard that read "Battle of Wilderness." A bit farther on, a sign pointed to "C.S.A. Parking Area." A woman sat behind a bridge table, chatting on a cellular phone. "Are you preregistered?" she asked me. I mumbled something about the Southern Guard. "Well, just fall in," she said, glancing at her watch. "Afternoon battle's about to begin."

Just beyond the parking lot and a row of portable toilets, several thousand Confederates mustered as drums rolled and flags unfurled. I scanned the long lines of gray but couldn't find any of the Southern Guard. A ragtag troop marched past, led by a lean, strikingly handsome figure. He wore wire-rimmed spectacles and a battered slouch hat, brown and curled, like a withered autumn leaf. He looked like a cross between Jeb Stuart and Jim Morrison.

I saluted him and said, "Sir, I've lost my unit. May I fall in with yours?"

"Certainly, private," he drawled. "I regret to say that one of our men fell in this morning's fight. You may take his place."

He pointed me to the rear rank, between two middle-aged men. The one to my left, who identified himself as Bishop, had graying hair and what looked like red finger paint smeared on his face. Bishop had been wounded in the morning clash. He pointed to his stained cheek. "Yankee bullet just bounced off me," he said. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a tube labelled "Fright Stuff: Fake Blood." "Got it at a gag shop," he said. "It's mostly corn syrup, with some dye and chemicals mixed in."

The soldier to my right, a huge, long-haired man named O'Neill, told me that he'd fought as a Marine in Vietnam. When the Rebel Army halted, confused

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AT THE GALLERIES

EARLY BIRDER

STIMULATED by a trip to the young Colonial capital of Williamsburg in 1712, the English naturalist and painter Mark Catesby (1682-1749) obtained the backing of the Royal Society and returned to pass more than a decade in the plantations and lush wilderness of the Carolinas and points south, studying plants and animals, and painting the distinctive watercolor studies that were to form the body of his life's work, the two-volume "Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands."

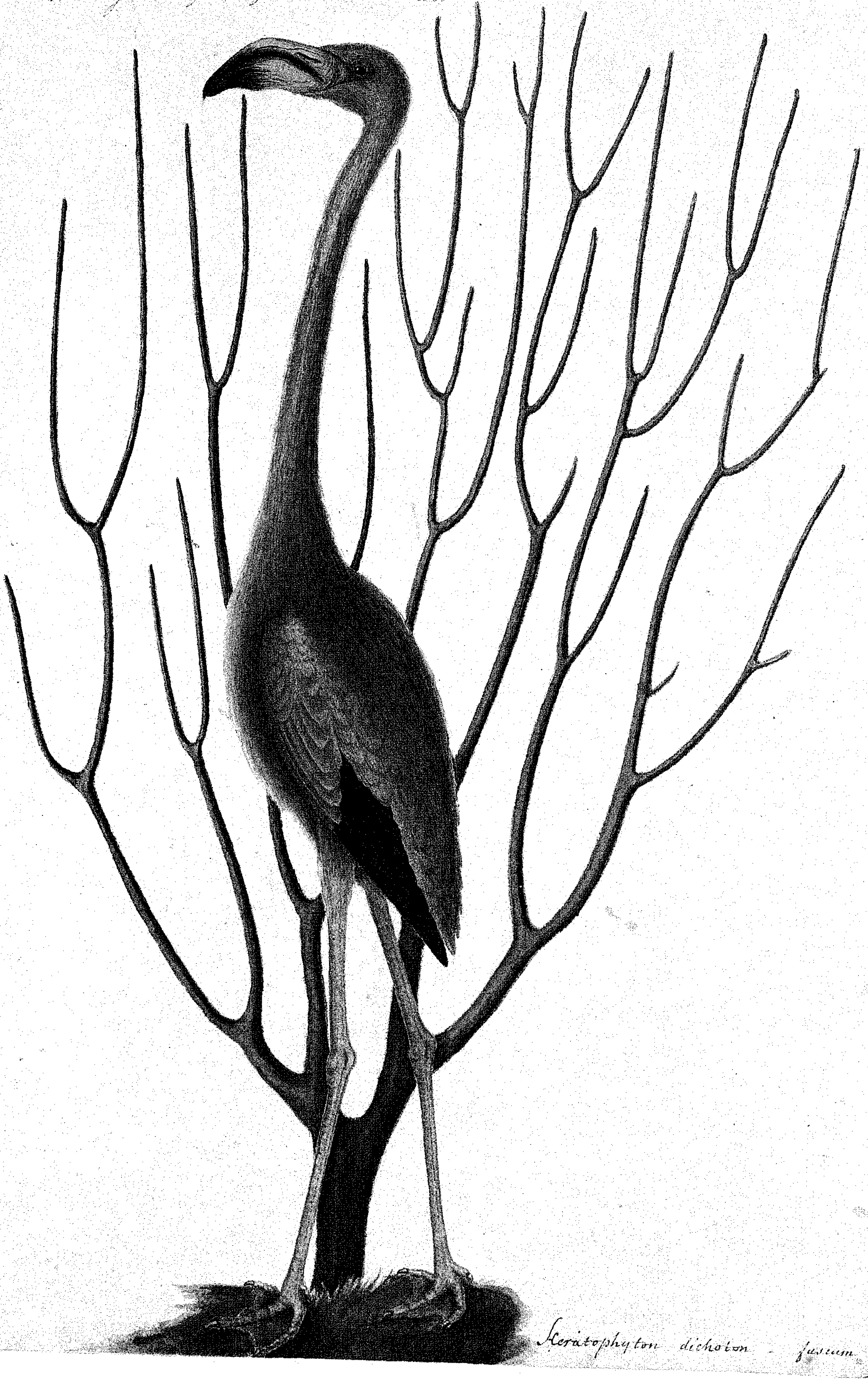
The first large-scale study of North American fauna and flora, this treasure, which deftly melded art and scientific observation to convey a sense of the natural riches of empire, electrified science-mad England. The original watercolors, which were purchased by King George III, disappeared into the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, and have yet to be published. Now fifty of the watercolors are on view at the DeWitt Wallace Gallery at Colonial Williamsburg, and will soon continue their tour of the country, while limited numbers of handmade facsimile prints are available for sale through J. Pocker & Son, in New York.

Catesby's paintings easily survive the inevitable comparison with Audubon, whom he preceded by more than a century. Delicate and painterly, fresh in composition, and brilliant in their colors, they suggest an itinerant scholar entranced by his subjects, which included fish, land crabs, bison, turtles, snakes, tree frogs, insects, hundreds of birds, and a bursting botanical array, elegantly and sometimes whimsically juxtaposed with his creatures. (The Bahama Flamingo, opposite, even appears in front of a coral tree.) Some of Catesby's titles have a local flavor—"The Pol Cat," "The Wampum Snake," "The Kuckow of Carolina"—that is cheerfully at odds with his careful accompanying Latin descriptions: further evidence of a happy engagement between the poised, brightly caparisoned specimen and its appreciative preserver.

—ROGER ANGELL

COURTESY ALECTO HISTORICAL EDITIONS

Flamingo. Phœnicopterus Bahamiensis 73



Keratophyton dichoton - fuscum

"Something from the supplement cart?"

• •

over where it was headed, O'Neill muttered, "Just like the real military—a continual fucking screwup."

I'd joined Company H of the 32nd Virginia, from the Tidewater area in the state's southeast. The handsome man in command was Captain Tommy Mullen, a carpenter. O'Neill worked as a receptionist in a museum. Bishop was a cop. Many of the others worked in the shipyards around Newport News. "We're a bunch of average Joes, pretty much like the Confederates of old," Bishop said.

"Bullshit!" O'Neill protested. "We're a bunch of fat slobs who couldn't hack it in the real Civil War for an hour."

We reached a line of trees. "Watch the poison ivy!" one man called out. As we were marching through a manure-laden pasture, someone yelled, "Watch the land mines! And the electric cable." O'Neill explained that a film crew was recording the battle. "My brother's on the other side, in the Sixty-ninth New York," he said. "He lives in New Jersey. I'm hoping to get filmed capturing him."

We stumbled through brambly woods until Captain Mullen ordered us to halt. Then he gave us a few stage directions. "The Yanks get hit big time, forty-five per cent casualties," he said. "But those Rebs to the right of us are going to get overrun, so we've got to counterattack and chase the Yanks back." Artillery began pounding in the field just beyond the woods. Each time the cannon boomed, the ground shook and pine needles showered down around us. A foul gray smog seeped in among the trees. "Suck it in, boys," Captain Mullen said, resuming his Civil War persona. Troops to the right of us hoisted their guns and flags and rushed out of the woods, vanishing into the smoke and noise. There was a keening Rebel yell and the crackle of small-arms fire. I started to feel butterflies. Crouching in the woods, peering into the smoke, and listening to the percussion of guns and artillery, I sensed a little of what one of Mathew Brady's soldiers must have felt, with no idea who was winning the battle or even what his part in it should be.

"Prime muskets!" the captain barked. All around me, the men of the 32nd bit open paper cartridges and poured black powder down their rifle barrels. I was the only man without a gun. I asked the captain what part I might play in the combat. "If one of our men should fall, pick up his musket and fight on," he said. He added, "If no one goes down, run around awhile and then take a hit. We can always use casualties."

Back in line, I told Bishop about my orders. "Casualties are a problem," he said. "Nobody wants to drive three hours to get here, then go down in the first five minutes and spend the day lying on cow pies." O'Neill cut in with a safety tip about dying. "Check your ground before you go down," he said. "I've gotten bruises from falling on my canteen. Also, don't die on your back, unless you want sunburn." Shoulder to shoulder, we marched out of the woods and into the clouded field. We marched forward, then sideways, blinded by smoke. Somewhere a fife tootled "Dixie."

Captain Mullen took out binoculars and peered through the gloom. "Halt!" he shouted. Just ahead, we heard a murmur of voices and what sounded like triggers cocking. At the order "Form battle lines!" ten men knelt, rifles at the ready, with ten others standing right behind. Then the smoke cleared, revealing a crowd of spectators in lawn chairs, aiming cameras and videos at us. "There they are!" one of the spectators shouted, and a hundred shutters clicked.

"Company, left!" Mullen yelled, wheeling us sharply around and back into the smoke. Suddenly, fifty or so Yankees appeared just in front of us, as startled as we were. Upon Mullen's next command—"Fire at will!"—flames licked from the muskets and bits of white cartridge paper fluttered all around us. The blanks made a deafening roar. Like street mimes, the Yankees aped our motions precisely. Then both sides frantically loaded and fired again. "Pour it in, boys!" the captain shouted.

I put my fingers in my ears and crouched beside O'Neill. The Yankees were no more than twenty yards in front of us, firing round after round. I waited in vain for one of our men to go down.

"Damn Yanks can't shoot straight," O'Neill said, lips black with powder. Apparently, the Rebels couldn't aim, either. Despite the withering fire, only one Federal had gone down. "Yanks never take hits," O'Neill griped. "Fuckin' Kevlar army."

Then, obeying the battle's script, the Yankees suddenly turned and ran. Mullen drew his sabre. "Look, boys," he said, "they're turning tail! Drive 'em, boys! Drive 'em!"

"No-account Yankees!"

"Candy asses!"

"Take no prisoners! Kill 'em all!"

We reached a field littered with blue figures. Several of the dead lay propped on their elbows, pointing Instamatics at the oncoming Rebs. “O.K., boys,” the captain said after we’d poured imaginary lead at the enemy for fifteen minutes. “Time to take some hits.”

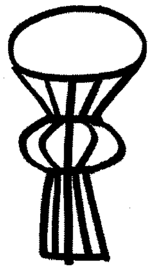
Bishop reached into his pocket for the Fright Stuff. Smearing the bright-red goop on his temples, he asked me, “Want a squirt?” I shook my head, imagining what Rob Hodge would say if I returned his uniform with fake bloodstains. “Watch for land mines when you go down,” Bishop reminded me.

The Yankees unleashed another volley. I clutched my belly, groaned loudly, and stumbled to the ground. O’Neill flopped on his side like a sick cow, bellowing, “I’m a goner! Oh, God, I’m a goner!” Then he spotted his brother from New Jersey, lying in the grass nearby. “Hey, Steve, they got you, too! Just like the Civil War, brother against brother!”

A FEW minutes later, the battle ended with the playing of “Taps” and the order for us to “resurrect” and shake hands with enemy corpses. Combat wasn’t scheduled to resume until the next day, so the soldiers and spectators scattered—to the portable toilets and to a huge tent encampment called “the sutlers’ row.” (“Sutler” was a Civil War term for merchants who provisioned the Armies.) North and South mingled peaceably here along dirt streets lined with shops selling uniforms, hoop skirts, and other period items. The atmosphere was self-consciously quaint—one store was labelled “The Carpetbagger” and another “War Profiteer Serving Both North and South.” I wandered over to the “civilian camps.” In a Rebel tent I came upon a Soldiers Aid Society, where women dressed as Southern belles sat knitting socks, sipping Confederate coffee (parched corn sweetened with dark molasses), and gossiping about their Northern counterparts. “Yankee women, of course, may not be of the highest moral order,” one woman drawled.

In the nearby Union camp, I was handed a schedule of events that included a square dance, a women’s tea, and an outdoor church service at which two reënactors were to be married. For all the military bravado, reënacting seemed a clean-cut family hobby, combining elements of a camping trip, a country fair, and a costume party. It was also becoming clear that the hobby attracted mostly conservative, middle-class people who were nostalgic for what they imagined was a simpler, slower, and more neighborly world, one that had distinct social roles. “It’s an era lost that we’re trying to recapture,” a Union campwife named Judy Harris told me as she washed clothes in a tub. “Men were men, and women were women. It was less complicated.” A soldier walked past, tipped his hat to Harris, and said “Evening, ma’am.” She smiled and said to me, “See what I mean? No one’s that polite in real life anymore.” Harris, who said she worked as a data processor, added, “No one asks what you do for a living. You could be a dentist or a ditch digger. See that general over there? He’s probably pumping gas at Exxon during the week.”

While women like Harris were welcome in civilian camp, the same wasn’t always true on the battlefield. A female reënactor dressed as a male soldier had successfully sued the National Park Service following her expulsion from a 1989 battle. (She was caught coming out of the women’s bathroom.) Ever since, a few women had dressed and fought as soldiers, despite grumbling from male reënactors. A different sort of cross-dressing—Southerners clad as Northerners, and vice versa—was encouraged. The reason became obvious as I toured the Union camp. Blue had outnumbered gray almost two to one at the real Battle of the Wilderness; the opposite was true here. In fact, a shortage of Yankees was endemic to reënactments—particularly to those staged below the Mason-Dixon Line. So it helped to carry two outfits, in case the other side needed you. Reënactors called this “galvanizing,” which was the Civil War term for soldiers’ switching sides during the conflict.



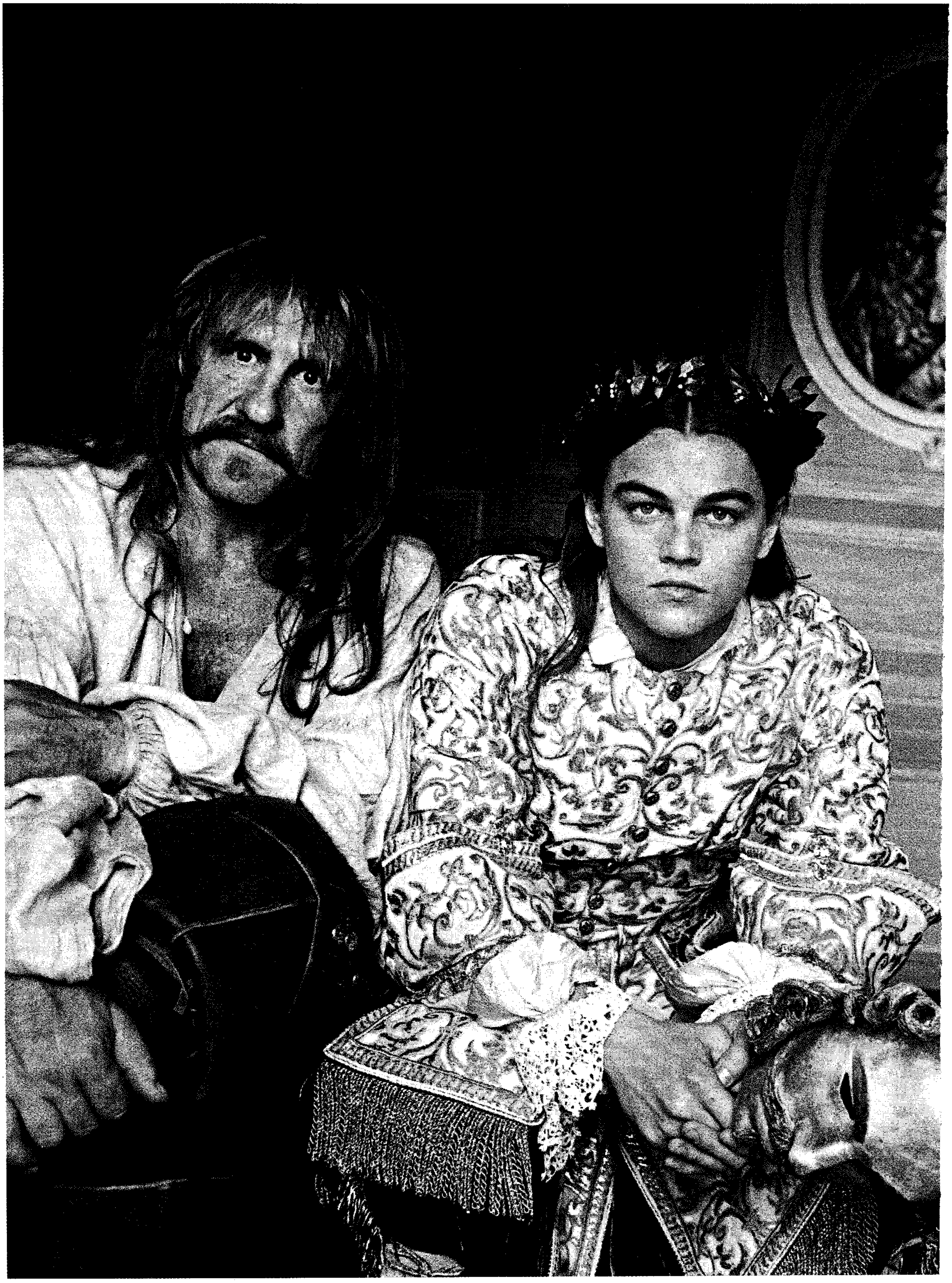
One reason for the preponderance of Rebels was the instinctive sympathy that Americans feel for the underdog. “When I play Northern, I feel like the Russians in Afghanistan,” a Reb from New Jersey explained to me. “I’m the invader, the bully.” The South also had the edge in terms of romance. Conformist ranks of blue couldn’t compete with Jeb Stuart, Ashley Wilkes, and other doomed cavaliers of the Confederacy.

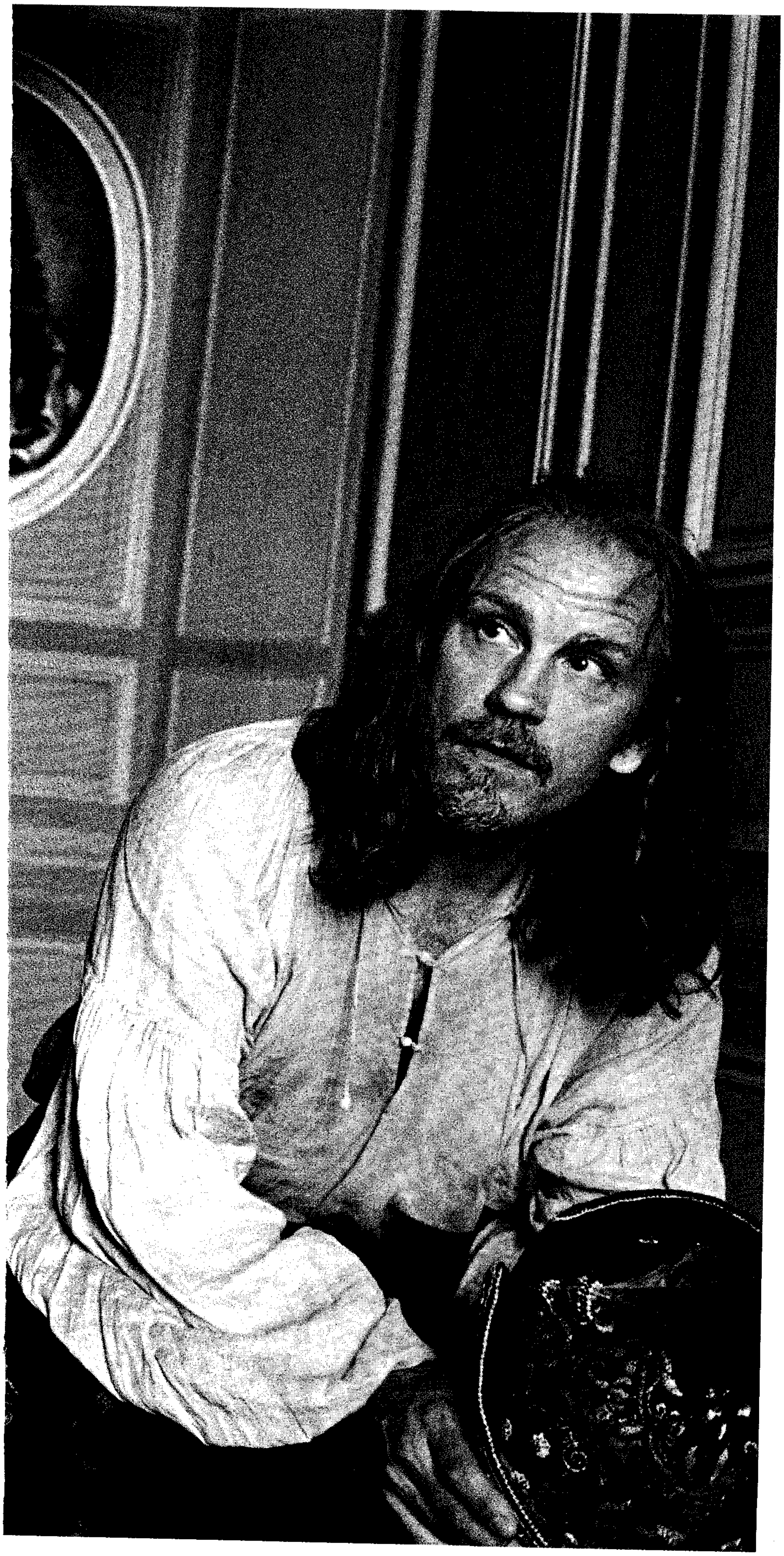
Wearing gray had little to do with politics; the awkward racial questions surrounding allegiance to the South didn’t intrude. (Although the film “Glory” had inspired the creation of several units modelled on its black regiment, most reënactments remained virtually all-white affairs.) Many reënactors spoke of a desire to “educate the public,” yet their concerns seemed essentially ahistorical: North and South, murderous foes for four years, were now blandly reconciled—interchangeable, even—in a spectacle that glorified the valor and the stoicism of both sides. “We’re not here to debate slavery or states’ rights,” Ray Gill, a gray-clad Connecticut accountant, told me. “We’re here to preserve the experience of the common soldier, North and South.”

That night, a sudden downpour drove the soldiers into their tents, and I headed off in search of Rob Hodge. I finally found a few Southern Guardsmen, hunched at the rear of a sutler’s lean-to, who told me that Hodge had become so disgusted with the luxury of even this modest shelter that he had decamped to a nearby field. I found him there the next morning, wringing out socks over a sodden fire. “I wanted to see what it’s like to be soaked and cold on the night of battle,” he said. “Now I know—it sucks.”

I sat with him while he cooked salt pork in a half-canteen that served as his frying pan, poking the sowbelly with a bayonet. After half an hour, the pan had become a puddle of grease, with fatty chunks bobbing atop the scum. Rob skewered a piece and dangled it beneath my nose. “C’mon,” he coaxed, “just think of it as blackened country ham.” He took a chunk in his mouth and I did the same. We gasped, our eyes filling with tears. The meat didn’t resemble meat at all; it tasted like a soggy cube of salt. “I bet this stuff killed more Rebs than Yankee bullets ever did,” Rob groaned, dribbling the pan grease onto his trousers and dabbing a bit in his beard.

BACK home, I pulled Poppa Isaac’s book of Civil War sketches from the shelf. The title had rubbed off its spine and the pages discharged a puff of yellowed paper dust when I opened the massive cover. Turning the pages,





I wondered aga what had led
great-grandfathe to buy this b
soon after emigrat from Russ
The only clue I found near the e
of a Robert Penn Warr
the Civil War. "A high essay abo
of our population was no portio
this country when the War wn i
fought," Warren wrote. "Not thing
disqualifies the grandson from ex
encing to the full the imaginative
peal of the Civil War. To experience t
appeal may be, in fact, the very ritua
of being American."

As a teen-age émigré with no family in America, Poppa Isaac must have felt profoundly adrift when he disembarked at Ellis Island, just seventeen years after Appomattox. Perhaps, having come from learned, rabbinical stock, he sensed that the complex saga of the Civil War was an American Talmud that would unlock the secrets of his adopted land and make him feel a part of it. Or perhaps, like young immigrants today who so quickly latch on to brand names and sports teams, he was drawn to the Civil War as a badge of citizenship. After all, as Warren wrote, "To be American is not . . . a matter of blood; it is a matter of an idea—and history is the image of that idea." ♦

UNSINKABLE

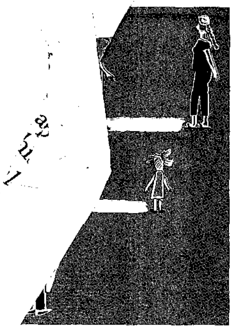
Hollywood prophets are saying that Leonardo DiCaprio will not receive an Oscar nomination this week for "Titanic." If they're right, it won't take a crystal ball to know that his career isn't going to suffer. The film's remarkable success (it has now grossed more than six hundred million dollars) is due in part to the twenty-four-year-old actor's screen-idol performance: according to CNN, a recent survey found that seven per cent of all teen-age girls have seen the movie at least twice. In the March release "The Man in the Iron Mask"—the screenwriter and director Randall Wallace's version of Alexandre Dumas's romantic novel—DiCaprio portrays both Louis XIV and the title character. He co-stars with a more seasoned but equally striking cast that includes Gabriel Byrne, Jeremy Irons, and, with DiCaprio (left), Gerard Depardieu and John Malkovich.

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe

NIGHT VISION

A man of the world comes home.

BY AMY BLOOM



FOR fifteen years, I saw her only in my dreams. When my father got sick in the spring of my junior year, dying fast and ugly right before Christmas, I went to Paris to recover, to become someone else, *un homme du monde*, an expert in international maritime law, nothing like the college boy who slept with his stepmother the day of his father's funeral. We grieved apart, after that night, and I left her to raise my little brother, Buster, and pay all the bills my father left behind. Buster shuttled back and forth for holidays, even as a grown man, calm and affectionate with us both, carrying Deaf Smith County peanut butter in blue Tupperware to Paris for my Christmas morning and bringing jars of Fauchon jam back to her, packed in three of his sweat socks. Her letters came on the first of every month, for fifteen years, news of home, of my soccer coach's retirement, newspaper clippings about maritime law and French shipping lines, her new address in Massachusetts, a collection of her essays on jazz. I turned the book over and learned that her hair had turned gray.

"You gotta come home, Lionel," my brother said last time, his wife sprawled beside him on my couch, her long pretty feet resting on his crotch.

"I don't think so."

"She misses you. You know that. You should go see her." Jewelle nodded, digging her feet a little further, and Buster grinned hugely and closed his eyes.

"You guys," I said.

My brother married someone more beautiful and wild than I would have. They had terrible, flying-dishes fights and passionate reconciliations every few months, and they managed to divorce and remarry in one year, without even embarrassing themselves. Jewelle loved Buster to death and told me she only left when he needed leaving, and my brother would say in her defense that it was nothing more than the truth. But when Buster and Jewelle were together (usually Columbus Day through July 4th weekend), happiness poured out of them. Buster showed slides of Jewelle's art work, thickly layered slashes of dark paint, and Jewelle cooked platters of fried chicken and bragged on his latest legal victories. When they were apart, they both lost weight and shine and acted like people in the final stage of terminal heartbreak.

"Ma misses you," he said. He held Jewelle's feet in one hand. "You know she does. She's getting old."

"I definitely don't believe that. She's fifty, maybe fifty-five. That's not old. We'll be there ourselves in no time."

My mother, my stepmother, my only mother, is fifty-four and I am thirty-three and it has comforted me over the years to picture myself in what I expect to be a pretty vigorous middle age and to contemplate poor Julia tottering along, nylon knee-highs sloshing around her ankles, chin hairs and dewlaps flapping in the breeze.

Buster cut four inches of Brie and chewed on it. "She's not a real young fifty-five. What did she do so wrong, Lionel? Tell me. I know she loves you, I know she loves me. She loved Pop, she saved his life as far as I can tell. Jesus, she took care of Grammy Ruth for three years, when anyone else would've put a pillow over the woman's face. Ma is really a good person, and whatever has pissed you off, you could let it go. You know, she can't help being white."

Jewelle, of whom we could say the same thing, pulled her feet out of his hand and curled her toes over his waistband, under his round belly. I poured wine for us all and put out the fat green olives Jewelle liked.

"Well. Color is not the issue. You can tell her I'll come next June."

Buster went into my bedroom.

"I'm calling Ma," he said. "I'm telling her June."

Jewelle gently spat olive pits into her hand and shaped them into a neat pyramid on the coffee table.

I FLEW home with a new girlfriend, Claudine, and her little girl, Mirabelle. Claudine had business and a father in New York, and a small hotel and me in Paris. She was lean as a boy and treated me with wry Parisian affection, as if all kisses were mildly amusing if one gave it any thought. Claudine's consistent, insouciant aridity was easy on me; I'd come to prefer my lack of intimacy straight up. Mirabelle was my true sweetheart; I loved her orange cartoon curls, her red glasses, and her welterweight swagger. She was Ma Poupée and I was her Bel Homme.

Claudine's father left a new black Crown Victoria for us at J.F.K., with chocolates and a Tintin comic on the back seat and Joan Sutherland tapes in the tape player. Claudine folded up her black travel sweater and hung a white linen jacket on the back hook. There was five hundred dollars in the glove compartment, and I was apparently the only one who thought that if you were lucky enough to have a father you might reasonably expect him to meet you at the airport after a two-year separation. My father would have been at that gate, drunk or sober. Mirabelle kicked the back of the driver's seat all the way from the airport, singing what the little boy from Dallas had taught her on the flight over: "*I'm* gonna kick you. I'm *gonna* kick you. I'm gonna *kick* you. I'm gonna kick *you*, right in your big old heinie." Claudine watched out the window until I pulled onto the turnpike, and then she closed her eyes. Anything in English was my department.

I recognized the new house right away. My mother had dreamed and sketched its front porch and its swing a hundred times during my childhood, on every telephone-book cover and notepad we ever had. For years my father talked big about a glass-and-steel house on the

FILIP PAGOWSKI

water, recording studio overlooking the ocean, wraparound deck for major partying and jam sessions, and for years I sat next to him while he read the paper and I read the funnies and we listened to my mother tuck my brother in: "Once upon a time, there were two handsome princes, Prince Fric, who was a little older, and Prince Frac, who was a little younger. They lived with their parents, the King and Queen, in a beautiful cottage with a beautiful front porch looking out over the River Wilde. They lived in the little cottage because a big old castle with a wraparound deck and a million windows is more trouble than it's worth."

JULIA stood before us, both arms upraised, her body pale and square in front of an old willow, its branches pooling on the lawn. Claudine pulled off her sunglasses and said, "You don't resemble her," and I explained, as I thought I had explained several times between Rue de Birague and the Massachusetts border, that this was my stepmother, that my real mother had died when I was nine and Julia had married my father and adopted me. "Ah," said Claudine, "not your real mother."

Mirabelle said, "*Qu'est-ce que c'est, ça*?"

"Tire swing," I said.

Claudine said, "May I smoke?"

"I don't know. She used to smoke."

"Did she stop?"

"I don't know. I don't know if she smokes or not, Claudine."

She reached for her jacket. "Does your mother know I'm coming?"

"Here we are, *poupée*," I said to Mirabelle.

I STOOD by the car and watched my mother make a fuss over Mirabelle's red hair (speaking pretty good French, which I had never heard) and turn Claudine around to admire the crispness of her jacket. She shepherded us up the steps, thanking us for the gigantic, unimaginative bottle of toilet water. Claudine went into the bathroom; Mirabelle was out on the swing. My mother and I stood in her big white kitchen. She hadn't touched me.

"Bourbon?" she said.

"It's midnight in Paris—too late for me."

"Right," my mother said. "Gin-and-tonic?" We were clinking our glasses when Claudine came out and asked for water and an ashtray.

"No smoking in the house, Claudine. I'm sorry."

Claudine shrugged in that contemptuous way Parisians do, so wildly disdainful you have to laugh or hit them. She went outside, lighting up before she was through the door. We touched glasses again.

"Maybe you didn't know I was bringing a friend?" I said.

My mother smiled. "Buster didn't mention it."

"Do you mind?"

"I don't mind. You might have been bringing her to meet me. I don't think you did, but you might have. And a very cute kid. Really adorable."

"And Claudine?"

"Very pretty. *Chien*. That's the word I remember, I don't know if they still say that." *Chien* is a bitchy, stylish appeal. They do still say that, and my own landlady has said it of Claudine. Julia dug her hands into a bowl of tarragon and cream cheese and pushed it, one little white gob at a time, under the skin of the big chicken sitting on the counter. "Do you cook?"

"I do. I'm a good cook. Like Pop."

My mother put the chicken into the oven and laughed. "Honey, what did your father ever cook?"

"He was a good cook. He made those big breakfasts on Sunday. He barbecued great short ribs. I remember those."

"Oh, Abyssinian ribs. I remember them, too. Those were some great parties, in those bad old days. Even after he stopped drinking, your father was still really fun at a party." She smiled as if he were still in the room.

My father was a madly friendly, kissy, unreliable drunk when I was a little boy, and a successful, dependable musician and father after he married Julia. Once she became my mother, I never worried about him, I never hid again from that red-eyed, wet-lipped stranger, but I did occasionally miss the old drunk.

Claudine stuck her head back into the kitchen, beautiful and squinting through her smoke, and Mirabelle ran in beneath her. My mother handed her two carrots and a large peeler with a black spongy handle for arthritic cooks, and Mirabelle flourished it at us both, our little musketeer. My mother brought out three less fancy peelers, and we worked our way through a good-sized pile of carrots and pink potatoes. Then she told us how she met my father at Barbara Cook's house and how they both ditched their dates, my mother leaving her favorite coat behind, and Claudine told us about the guest who snuck twin Siamese blue points into the hotel in her ventilated Vuitton trunk and bailed out on her bill, taking six towels and leaving the cats behind. Claudine had laughed at my mother's story and shaken her head over the lost red beaver jacket and my mother laughed at Claudine's story and shook her head over people's foolishness. Mirabelle fished the lime out of Claudine's club soda and sucked on it.

A feeling of good will and confidence settled on me for no reason I can imagine.

"Hey," I said, "let's stay over."

My mother smiled and looked at Claudine.

"Perhaps we will just see how we feel," Claudine said. "I am a little fatigue."

"Why don't you take a nap before dinner," my mother and I said simultaneously.

"Perhaps," she said, and kept peeling.

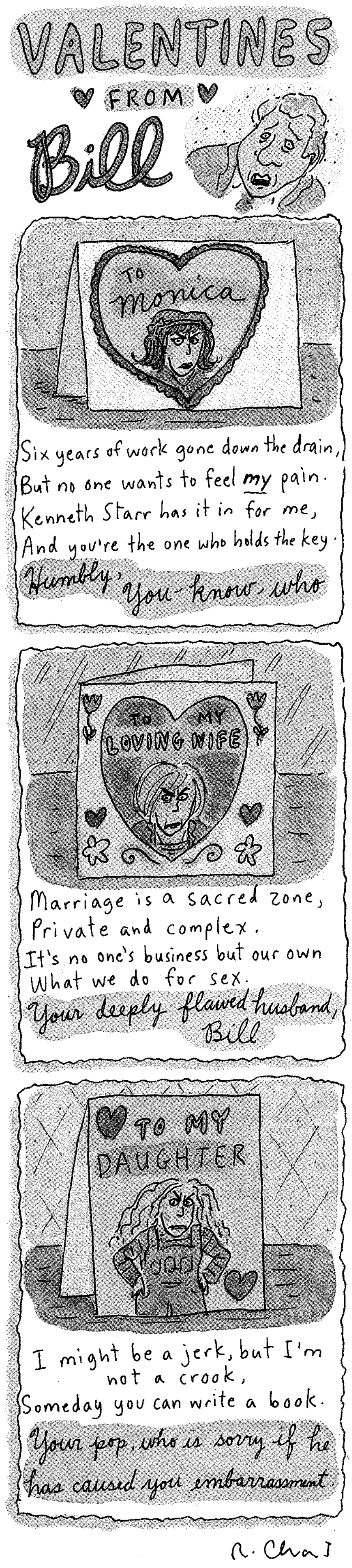
I think now that I must have given Claudine the wrong impression, that she'd come expecting a doddering old lady, none too sharp or tidy these days, living on dented canned goods and requiring a short, sadly empty visit before she shuffled off this mortal coil. Julia, with a silver braid hanging down her broad back, in black T-shirt, black pants, and black two-dollar flip-flops on her wide coral-tipped feet, was not that old lady at all.

My mother gave Mirabelle a bowl of cut-up vegetables to put on the table, and she carried them like treasure, the pink radishes bobbing in the ice-cubed water. Claudine waved her hand around, wanting another cigarette, and my mother gave her a glass of red wine. Claudine put it down a good ten inches away from her.

"I am sorry. I must return. Lionel, will you arrange your car? Mirabelle and me must return after dinner. Thank you, Madame Sampson, for your kindness."

My mother lifted her glass to Claudine. "Anytime. I hope you both come again." She did not say anything like "Oh, no, my dear, it's such a long drive," or "Lionel, you can't let Claudine make that drive all by herself." I poured myself another drink. I'm still surprised I didn't offer to drive, because I was brought up properly, and because I had been sure until the moment Mirabelle pulled the lime out of Claudine's glass that I wanted to leave, that I had come only so that I could depart.

Mirabelle told my mother the long story of the airplane meal and the spilled soda and the nice lady and the bad little boy from Texas and Teddy's difficult flight, squashed in a suitcase with a hiking boot pressed against his nose for seven hours. My


VALENTINES
FROM
Bill
TO
monica
Six years of work gone down the drain,
But no one wants to feel my pain.
Kenneth Starr has it in for me,
And you're the one who holds the key.
Humbly, You-know-who
TO MY LOVING WIFE
Marriage is a sacred zone,
Private and complex.
It's no one's business but our own
What we do for sex.
Your deeply flawed husband, Bill
TO MY DAUGHTER
I might be a jerk, but I'm not a crook,
Someday you can write a book.
Your pop, who is sorry if he has caused you embarrassment.
R. Chast

mother laughed and admired and clucked sympathetically in all the right places, passing platters of chicken and cucumber salad and minted peas. I watched her pour another grenadine-and-ginger-ale for Mirabelle, who waited for the bubbles to rise through the fuchsia syrup. She had just reached for her glass when Claudine arranged her knife and fork on her plate and stood up. Mirabelle sighed, tilting her head back to drain her drink, like one of my father's old buddies at closing time. We all watched her swallow. My mother made very strong coffee for Claudine, filling an old silver thermos for her and putting together a plastic-wrapped mound of lemon squares for the road. My mother doted on Mirabelle and deferred to Claudine, as if they were my lovable child and my formidable wife and she my fond and familiar mother. She refused to let us clear the table and amused Mirabelle while Claudine changed into comfortable night-driving clothes. Mirabelle and my mother kissed goodbye, French style, and then Claudine did the same, walking out the kitchen door without waiting to see if I followed, which, of course, I did. I didn't want to be, I wasn't, rude or uninterested, I just didn't want to leave yet. Mirabelle lay down on the back seat. I made a little sweater pillow for her, and she brushed her cheek against my hand. Claudine made a big production of adjusting the Crown Victoria's side mirror, the rearview mirror, and the seat belt.

"Do you know how to get to Ninety-five?" I asked, in French.

"Yes."

"And then you stay on Ninety-five through Connecticut—"

"I have a map," she said. "I can sleep by the side of the road until morning if I get lost."

"That probably won't be necessary," I said. "You have five hundred dollars in cash and seven credit cards. There'll be a hundred motels between here and the city."

"We'll be fine. I will take care of everything," she said. In very fast English she added, "Do not call me in New York, all right? We can speak to each other when you get back to Paris, perhaps."

"O.K., Claudine. Take it easy. I'm sorry. I'll call you in a few weeks. Mirabelle, *dors bien, fais de beaux rêves, mon ange.*"

I WATCHED them drive off and I watched the fat white moon hanging over my mother's roof. I was scared to go back in the house. I called out, "Where's Buster? I thought he was coming up." I had threatened to cancel my visit if my brother didn't join me within twenty-four hours.

My mother stuck her head out the front door.

"He'll be here tomorrow. He's jammed up in court. He said dinner at the latest."

"With or without the Jewelle?"

"With. Very much with. It's only June, you know."

"You don't think she gives Bus a little *too much action?*"

"I don't think he's looking for peace. He's peaceful enough. I think he was looking for a wild ride and she gives it to him. And she does love him to death."

"I know. She's kind of a nut, Ma."

And it didn't matter what we said then, because my lips calling her mother, her heart hearing "mother" after so long, blew across the bright night sky and stirred the long branches of the willow tree.

"Are you coming in?" she said.

"In a few."

"In a few I'll be asleep. You can finish cleaning up."

I heard her overhead, her heavy step on the stairs, the creak of her bedroom floor, the double thump of the bathroom door I had already noticed needed fixing. I thought about changing the hinges on that door and I thought of my mouth around her hard nipple, her wet nightgown over my tongue, a tiny bubble of cotton I had to rip the nightgown to get rid of. She had reached over me to click off the light, and the last thing I saw that night was the white underside of her arm. In the dark, she smelled of honey and salt and the faint tang of wet metal.

I WASHED the wineglasses by hand and wiped down the counters. When my father was rehearsing and my brother was noodling around in his room, when I wasn't too busy with soccer and school, my mother and I cleaned up the kitchen and listened to music. We talked or we didn't, and she did some old Moms Mabley routines and I did Richard Pryor, and we stayed in the kitchen until about ten.

I called upstairs.

"Do you mind living alone?"

My mother stood at the top of the stairs in a man's blue terry-cloth robe and blue fuzzy slippers the size of small dogs.

"Sweet Jesus, it *is* Moms Mabley," I said.

"No hat," she said.

I realized, a little late, that it was not a kind thing to say to a middle-aged woman.

"And I've still got my teeth. I put towels in the room at the end of the hall. The bed's made up. I'll be up before you in the morning."

"How do you know?"

"I don't know." She came down three steps. "I'm pretending I know. But it is true that I get up earlier than most people. I can make you an omelette, if you want."

"I'm not much of a breakfast man."

She smiled, and then her smile folded up and she put her hand over her mouth.

"Ma, it's all right."

"I hope so, honey. Not that— I'm still sorry." She sat down on the stairs, her robe pulled tight under her thighs.

"It's all right."

I poured us both a little red wine and handed it to her, without going up the stairs.

"So, do you mind living alone?"

My mother sighed.

"Not so much. I'm a pain in the ass. I could live with a couple of other old ladies, I guess. Communal potlucks and watching who's watering down the gin. It doesn't really sound so bad. Maybe in twenty years."

"Maybe you'll meet someone."

"Maybe. I think I'm pretty much done meeting people."

"You're only fifty-four. You're the same age as Tina Turner."

"Yup. And Tina is probably tired of meeting people, too. How about you, do you mind living alone?"

"I don't exactly live alone—"

"You do. That's exactly what you do, you live alone. And have relationships with people who are very happy to let you live alone."

"Claudine's really a lot of fun, Ma. You didn't get to know her."

"She may be a whole house of fun, but don't tell me she inspires thoughts of a happy domestic life."

"No."

"That little girl could."

I told her a few of my favorite Mirabelle stories and she told me stories I had forgotten about me and my brother, drag-racing shopping carts down Cross Street, locking our babysitter in the basement, stretching ourselves on the doorways and praying to be tall.

"We never made you guys say your prayers, we certainly never went to church, and we kept you far away from Grammy Ruth's Never Forgive, Never Forget Pentecostal Church of the Holy Fruitcakes. And there you two would be, on your knees to Jesus, praying to be six feet tall."

"It worked," I said.

"It did." She stretched her legs down a few steps and I saw that they were unchanged, still smooth and tan, with hard calves that squared when she moved.

"You ought to think about marrying again," I said.

"You ought to think about doing it the first time."

"Well, let's get on it. Let's find people to marry. Broomstick-jumping time in Massachusetts and Paree."

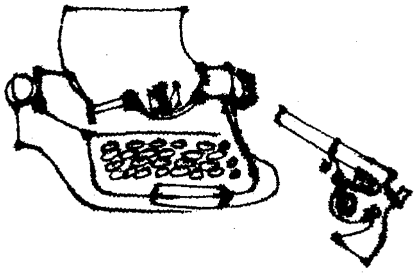
My mother stood up. "You do it, honey. You find someone smart and funny and kindhearted and get married so I can make a fuss over the grandbabies."

I saluted her with the wineglass. "Yes, Ma'am."

"Good night. Sleep tight."

"Good night, Ma."

I WAITED until I heard the toilet flush and the faucets shut, and I listened to her walk across her bedroom and heard her robe drop on the floor, and I could even hear her quilt settle down upon her. I drank in a serious way, which I rarely do, until I thought I could sleep. I made to lay my glasses on the rickety nightstand and dropped them on the floor near my clothes. Close enough, I thought, and lay down and had to sit up immediately, my eyes seeming to float out of my head, my stomach rising and falling in great waves of gin and Merlot. Stubbing my toe on the bathroom doorframe, I reached for the light switch and knocked over a water glass. I knew that broken glass lay all around me, although I couldn't see it, and I toe-danced backward toward the bed, twirling and leaping to safety. I reached for my glasses, hiding on the blue rug near my jeans, and somehow rammed my balls into the pink-and-brown Billie Holiday lamp. I fell to the floor, hoping for no further damage and complete unconsciousness.



My naked mother ran into the room. I was curled up into a ball, I think, my ass at her feet. She knelt beside me and pulled up a handful of hair so she could get a better look at me. Her breasts swung down, half in, half out of the hallway's dusty light.

"You do not have a scratch on you," she said, and patted my cheek. "Walk over toward the door, there's nothing that way. I'll get a broom."

I could see her, both more and less clearly than I would have liked. She pushed herself up, and the view of her folded belly and still-dark pubic hair was replaced by the sharp swing of her hips, wider now, tenderly pulled down at the soft bottom edges, but still with that same purposeful, kick-down-the-door walk.

She came back in her robe and slippers, with a broom and dustpan, and I wrapped a towel around my waist. I stood up straight so that, even if she needed glasses as much as I did, what she saw of me would look good.

"Quite the event. Is there something, some small thing in this room you didn't run into?"

"No," I said. "I think I've made contact with almost everything. The armchair stayed out of my way, but otherwise, I'd have to say, for a low-key kind of guy, I got the job done."

My mother dumped the pieces of glass and the light bulb and the lamp remains into the wastebasket.

"You smell like the whole Napa Valley," she said, "so I won't offer you a brandy."

"I don't usually drink this way, Ma. I'm sorry for the mess."

She put down the broom and the dustpan and came over to me and smiled at my towel. She put her lips to the middle of my chest, over my beating heart.

"I love you past speech."

We stood there, my neck bent over her shoulder, her hands kneading my back. We breathed in and out together.

"I'll say good night, honey. Quite a day."

She waved one hand over her shoulder and walked away. ♦

A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE ENEMY WITHIN

The making and unmaking of James Baldwin.

BY HILTON ALS

TWENTY-TWO years ago, when I was fourteen, I was given James Baldwin's second collection of essays, "Nobody Knows My Name" (1961), by his friend and my mentor the writer Owen Dodson, who was one of the more ebullient survivors of the Harlem Renaissance. The dust jacket of the book featured a photograph of Baldwin wearing a white T-shirt and standing in a pile of rubble in a vacant lot. It was this photograph that compelled me to read the book. I had never seen an image of a black boy like me—Baldwin looked as if he could have been posing in my old neighborhood, in East New York—gracing anything as impressive as a collection of essays. In fact, shortly after Owen gave me the book I began to pretend that the photograph of Baldwin was of me, or the writer I meant to be, and that the book's contents were my spiritual autobiography, or a record of the life I longed to lead. I was living in a roach-infested apartment in Crown Heights, along with my mother, my older sister, my younger brother, and the wearying fear that I would never escape from it. Baldwin, though, had grown up in circumstances not so different from my own, and he had gone on to become one of the most eminent writers America had ever produced. In the book, there was Baldwin in Paris attending a conference at the Sorbonne, Baldwin in Sweden interviewing Ingmar Bergman, Baldwin grappling with the exigencies of the life of the writer. And there was Baldwin realizing that, no matter how hard he had tried to separate himself from that black boy picking his way through the rubble of Harlem, he would always be regarded by some as a "nigger."

I didn't believe that I was a nigger, but I was certainly viewed with contempt by friends and family whenever my differences—which took the form of reading and writing, and hanging out with boys who called one another "girlfriend"—declared themselves. In reading Baldwin, then, I was listening to my secret voice, the voice of someone who wasn't afraid to describe who he was and where he'd come from and what he'd seen. Baldwin was also able to convey, in his labyrinthine, emotional prose, the persistent guilt that I felt toward my family—the family I would need to leave in order to become myself. And what compounded the guilt was the vague suspicion that in leaving them behind I would be leaving my blackness behind as well, to join the white world—a world that more often than not hurt and baffled my mother and siblings. Baldwin understood these things, because he'd survived them.

During the following year, I spent many hours in the main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, hunched over bound volumes of old magazines featuring stories about Baldwin. I was struck, in some photographs, by his enormous eyes, like dark poppies in bloom, raised in mock or serious consternation; in others, by his enormous grin, with the "liar's space" between the two front teeth. And then there were the interviews, during which he spoke with great candor and wit:

> JOURNALIST: When you were starting out as a writer, you were black, impoverished, and homosexual. You must have said to yourself, "Gee, how disadvantaged can I get?"
>
> BALDWIN: No, I thought I had hit the jackpot. It was so outrageous, you had to find a way to use it.

When I was older, and had become a writer myself, my feelings about Baldwin grew ambivalent. I have never been comfortable being identified as a black writer, particularly when that description comes from a white audience, which knows nothing of the limitations imposed by the term. Nor have I ever been comfortable with the presumed fraternity of black writers, academics, and intellectuals: I have spent my entire life trying to come to grips with my feelings for my own family, and had little interest in being adopted by another—one with its own provincialism, competitiveness, and misapprehensions. Baldwin, at one point in his life, felt the same. In 1959, when he was thirty-five, he wrote from his self-imposed exile in Europe that he had left America because he wanted to prevent himself from becoming merely "a Negro writer." He went on to become exactly that: the greatest Negro writer of his generation. Perhaps none of us escape the whipping post we've carved our names on. But Baldwin's career became a cautionary tale for me, a warning as well as an inspiration.

I recently returned to Baldwin, prompted by the Library of America's just-published two-volume selection of his novels, short stories, and essays, edited by Toni Morrison ($70). And I found that what I identified with in his work—the high-faggot style of his voice, the gripping narrative of his ascent from teen evangelist to cultural icon—had not changed for me since the days when I devoured his books like "some weird food" (as Baldwin once described his own early love of reading). My admiration for the way in which he alchemized the singularity of his perspective into art had not diminished. Neither had my discomfort with the way he had finally compromised that perspective. But I came to recognize something I'd missed during both my early infatuation and my later disaffection: no matter how much I tried to resist my identification with Baldwin, we were uneasy members of the same tribe.

JAMES BALDWIN was disenfranchised from the start. Born James Arthur Jones, in Harlem Hospital, on August 2, 1924, he was the illegitimate child of Emma Berdis Jones, who worked as a cleaning woman to support herself and her son. He never knew his biological father. In 1927, his mother married a Baptist preacher named David Baldwin; together, they reared eight other children, in a series of Harlem tenements. "My mother's strength was only to be called on in a desperate emergency," Baldwin wrote in 1972 in "No Name in the Street." Her eldest child soon learned that his mother "scarcely belonged to us: she was always in the hospital, having another baby." His stepfather was an unforgiving man with a terrible temper, who eventually lost his

James Baldwin in 1967. He contained a multitude of worlds, and those worlds were his true subject.

mind: "Between [the] children, who were terrified of him, the pregnancies, the births, the rats, the murders on Lenox Avenue, the whores who lived downstairs, his job on Long Island—to which he went every morning, wearing a Derby or a Homburg, in a black suit, white shirt, dark tie, looking like the preacher he was, and with his black lunchbox in his hand—and his unreciprocated love for the Great God Almighty, it is no wonder our father went mad."

In the midst of the anger and chaos of this household, the young Baldwin developed an insatiable appetite for literature. He writes in the introductory "Autobiographical Notes" to his first collection of essays, entitled "Notes of a Native Son" and published in 1955, "I read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and 'A Tale of Two Cities,' over and over and over. . . . In fact, I read just about everything I could get my hands on—except the Bible, probably because it was the only book I was encouraged to read." And, reading in the larger world of books, Baldwin began to see the smallness of the world in which he lived, and to devise ways of escaping. "I knew I was black, of course, but I also knew I was smart," he once said. "I didn't know how I would use my mind . . . but I was going to get whatever I wanted that way, and I was going to get my revenge that way."

Escape was intimately bound up with issues of race. In "Notes of a Native Son" Baldwin recalls that when he was nine or ten he wrote a play that was directed by a young white schoolteacher—"a woman, who then took an interest in me, and gave me books to read, and, in order to corroborate my theatrical bent, decided to take me to see what she somewhat tactlessly referred to as 'real' plays." He goes on, "Theater-going was forbidden in our house, but, with the really cruel intuitiveness of a child, I suspected that the color of this woman's skin would carry the day for me." And it did. David Baldwin could not object to Jimmy's education, because he could not contradict the power that the white woman's skin held in his imagination:

> He would have refused permission if he dared. The fact that he did not dare caused me to despise him. . . . In later years, particularly when it began to be clear that this "education" of mine was going to lead me to perdition, he became more explicit and warned me that my white friends in high school were not really my friends and that I would see, when I was older, how white people would do anything to keep a Negro down. . . . The best thing was to have as little to do with them as possible. I did not feel this way and I was certain, in my innocence, that I never would.

And so his stepfather's resistance proved a goad to his ambition, spurring him to reconfigure his world by turning difference into strength.

During Baldwin's years at Frederick Douglass Junior High School—from 1935 to 1938—his early ambitions were encouraged by one of the teachers there, the black homosexual writer Countee Cullen, who had enjoyed a vogue during the Harlem Renaissance. Baldwin went on to De Witt Clinton High School, a distinguished—and racially integrated—public school in the Bronx. Among his classmates were the future writer Emile Capouya, the future editor Sol Stein, and the future photographer Richard Avedon, with whom Baldwin coedited the school magazine, *The Magpie*. And as Baldwin began to venture—both literally and metaphorically—out of the neighborhood, some of his stepfather's forebodings began to be realized. Avedon remembers bringing Baldwin home to his family's apartment on the Upper East Side: "The elevator man looked at Jimmy and said, 'You have to go up the back stairs.' "

But even as Baldwin was travelling beyond the boundaries of the black community he was also trying to find his place in it. He underwent a religious conversion when he turned fourteen, began preaching shortly afterward, and proved to be good at it. In the small world of Harlem's Pentecostal churches, he had his first experience of fame, but he took little pleasure in it. "At this time of my life, Emile was the only friend I had who knew to what extent my ministry tormented me," Baldwin wrote many years later, in "The Devil Finds Work" (1976). Capouya believed that his friend remained in the church out of cowardice:

> Therefore, on the coming Sunday, he would buy two tickets to a Broadway matinee and meet me on the steps of the 42nd Street Library, at two o'clock in the afternoon. He knew that I spent all day Sunday in church—the point, precisely, of the challenge. . . . I had hoped for a reprieve, hoped, on the marked Sunday, to get away unnoticed: but I was the "young" Brother Baldwin, and I sat in the front row, and the pastor did not begin his sermon until about a quarter past one. Well. At one-thirty, I *tiptoed* out. . . . That was how I left the church.

He was seventeen. Shortly afterward, he left home, but he continued to help support his large family, working first at a defense plant in New Jersey, and then at a meatpacking plant in Manhattan. The racism he encountered during this period was debilitating in its unthinking brutality: twelve years later, he described the visceral response it evoked as being like "some dread, chronic disease, the unfailing symptom of which is a kind of blind fever, a pounding in the skull and fire in the bowels," and he added, "It can wreck more important things than race relations. There is not a Negro alive who does not have this rage in his blood."

David Baldwin died in 1943, several days before his adopted son's nineteenth birthday. Baldwin buried his stepfather, moved to Greenwich Village, and embarked on a new life as a bohemian. A year later, he met Richard Wright, who championed Baldwin's early efforts at fiction, recommending him to an editor at Harper & Brothers. It was Wright who first gave voice to Baldwin's experience of racism. "He was the greatest black writer in the world for me," Baldwin later recalled, in "Alas, Poor Richard." "In 'Uncle Tom's Children,' in 'Native Son,' and, above all, in 'Black Boy,' I found expressed, for the first time in my life, the sorrow, the rage, and the murderous bitterness which was eating up my life. . . . His work was an immense liberation and revelation for me."

Through Eugene Worth, a black friend who committed suicide in 1946 (and who inspired the character of Rufus in Baldwin's 1962 novel, "Another Country"), Baldwin was introduced to leftist politics, and in short order the nineteen-year-old writer was a card-carrying Trotskyist, but he didn't remain one long. ("It was useful in that I learned that it may be impossible to indoctrinate me," he wrote in the introduction to his collection of pieces "The Price of the Ticket.") Still, during that time he became acquainted with the intellectuals who would greatly influence the beginning of his career as a writer: Saul Levitas, of *The New Leader;* Randall Jarrell, of *The Nation;* Elliott Cohen and Robert Warshow, of *Commen-*

tary; and Philip Rahv, of *The Partisan Review*. These editors supported Baldwin's growth as a critic and allowed him access to the social world of New York intellectuals, but their patronage was not without its restrictions: as a black, he was expected and encouraged to review black books. "As for the books I reviewed—well, no one, I suppose, will ever read them again," Baldwin mused. "It was after the war, and Americans were on one of their monotonous conscience 'trips': be kind to niggers, for Christ's sake, be kind to Jews!"

To some extent, Baldwin used his blackness as a kind of surrogate Jewishness: it was his "difference" that sold, and the Jewish intellectuals who knew persecution at first hand could understand racism as persecution of a different hue. Baldwin described the connection himself, in his essay "The Harlem Ghetto," which was published in 1948:

> Though the notion of suffering . . . is based on the image of the wandering, exiled Jew, the context changes imperceptibly, to become a fairly obvious reminder of the trials of the Negro. . . . At this point, the Negro identifies himself almost wholly with the Jew. The more devout Negro considers that he *is* a Jew, in bondage to a hard taskmaster and waiting for Moses to lead him out of Egypt.

It is likely that this connection in suffering was clear to him as a citizen of Harlem, where the Jew was stigmatized for his whiteness, just as blacks were marked in the larger world for their blackness. But such observations must have also strengthened his sense of belonging to his new intellectual community.

Certainly this community helped to redefine Baldwin. By 1948, he was no longer the ugliest boy his father had ever seen but a promising young writer who was considered "very smart" by the older editors he worked for. And nothing is more necessary to a writer than attention. "Though it may have cost Saul Levitas nothing to hurl a book at a black boy to see if he could read it and be articulate concerning what he had read, I took it as a vote of confidence. And I loved him . . . and I think . . . that he was proud of me, and that he loved me, too." It is a touchingly vulnerable statement.

The reviews and essays Baldwin wrote for *The Nation* and other magazines are models of linguistic precision and critical acuity. In them he laid the groundwork for the themes he would explore and develop in his later essays: the tensions between blacks and Jews; black stereotypes in

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"Have we met?"

film; the effect of poverty on everyday life. At the same time, he was developing a style as a writer—a style that blended a full-throated preacherly cadence with the astringent obliquities of a semi-closeted queen.

Baldwin was also struggling to embrace a wider racial vision. At the end of his review of a biography of Frederick Douglass—a review published in *The Nation* in 1947, when Baldwin was only twenty-two—he wrote, "Relations between Negroes and whites, like any other province of human experience, demand honesty and insight; they must be based on the assumption that there is one race and that we are all part of it." At the same time, however, he wasn't trying to "transcend" his race: he was assuming the role of its spokesperson. In a review of Chester Himes's novel "The Lonely Crusade" Baldwin states, "On the low ground where Negroes live something is happening: something which can be measured in decades and generations and which may spell our doom as a republic and almost certainly implies a cataclysm."

In November, 1948, Baldwin decided to leave the country. Unwilling to end up like his stepfather, "sitting at the window, locked up in his terrors," he used the money from a literary fellowship he'd won to book passage to Paris. He arrived with just over forty dollars to his name and few contacts other than Richard Wright, who had arrived there two years earlier. But postwar Paris proved to be a refuge for a number of black Americans. And the Parisians, as Baldwin's friend Maya Angelou has said, were delighted with them: they were neither *les misérables* nor Algerians. "France was not without its race prejudices," she recalled in an interview. "It simply didn't have any guilt vis-à-vis black Americans. And black Americans who went there, from Richard Wright to Sidney Bechet, were so colorful, and so talented, and so marvellous, and so exotic. Who wouldn't want them?"

In Paris, Baldwin lived in a variety of hotels, some "ludicrously grim," and he supported himself in a variety of ways. His first summer, he worked as a clerk for a lawyer and he wrote pieces for French and American periodicals. And, for the first time in his life, he borrowed from friends and acquaintances. To live off the largesse of friends takes charm, but that was one resource he had in abundance. "He was able to really charm you, and entertain you, and beguile you, and I suppose seduce you if you were at all ready for it," the poet Richard Howard remembers.

Through Wright, Baldwin was introduced to the editors of the Paris-based magazine *Zero*, and for them, in 1949, he wrote his first critical piece about his former mentor—a devastating essay entitled "Everybody's Protest Novel." In it Baldwin argued that American protest literature simply confirmed stereotypes about blacks, and that Bigger Thomas, the antihero of Wright's 1940 novel, "Native Son," was the spiritual and ideological twin of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom—a victim used as a vessel to project the author's self-righteousness. Baldwin felt confined by political fiction; as he later explained, he wanted to be a writer "instead of a pamphleteer."

Owen Dodson told me that when Baldwin attacked Wright's aesthetic most black intellectuals and academics felt that he had gone too far. Disdainful of intellectual protectionism among blacks, I replied that I guessed that we were not only supposed to look alike but like alike, too. Today, however, as I read Baldwin's essays on Wright and sort through my own jumbled feelings, the truth seems a bit more complicated. Certainly both "Everybody's Protest Novel" and Baldwin's later essay "Alas, Poor Richard" (1961) expressed real misgivings that the younger man had about Wright's work. But these essays—as the title of the second one suggests—also constituted a very personal attack. Baldwin meant not only to bury the tradition of black letters which had its roots in a Communism supported by white dilettantes but also to supersede Wright as the one black writer worth reading in the largely white world of American letters. The Oedipal nature of their relationship was not lost on Baldwin, who once described Wright as "my ally and my witness, and alas! my father."

It is a similar desire for a father—and an ultimate distance from him—that accounts for most of the pathos of "Go Tell It on the Mountain," Baldwin's first and best novel, which was published, finally, in 1953. (Baldwin had worked on "Mountain"—originally entitled "In My Father's House"—in one form or another for a decade.) The story takes place in the course of a day—the day John, its hero, turns thirteen and is "saved" in the Baptist church where his father preaches. Sharing the stage with John are the dark, troubled "vertical saints." They are his immediate elders: his mother, Elizabeth; his stepfather, Gabriel; and Gabriel's sister

Florence. While John writhes and moans on the "threshing floor," each of them recounts, in flashback, the sins of his or her own past. John's sins—his blackness and his gayness—are part of the filth that he lives in and from which he cannot imagine how to escape. John's "ugliness" is also part of his sin. "His father had always said his face was the face of Satan—and was there not something—in the lift of the eyebrow, in the way his rough hair formed a V on his brow—that bore witness to his father's words? In the eye there was a light that was not the light of Heaven, and the mouth trembled, lustful and lewd, to drink deep in the winds of Hell."

The extraordinary power of "Mountain" arose from Baldwin's ability to convey the warping intensity of an elder's judgment and a child's inability to protect himself from it. John cannot understand why his father despises him, because the fact that the father despises himself does not occur to John. Nor can John imagine being able to escape him: there will never be any reprieve from the memory of his cruelty and its effect.

The psychic tug-of-war between attraction and rejection was also destined to play itself out in Baldwin's relationships with other men. Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Baldwin met a seventeen-year-old Swiss artist named Lucien Happesberger. The fact that Happesberger was white and Baldwin black was less of a transgression than it would have been back in the States. "In Paris," Baldwin said, "I didn't feel socially attacked, but relaxed, and that allowed me to be loved."

"He was this rather silly, giddy, predatory fellow who was extraordinarily unattractive-looking," Richard Howard recalls. "There's a famous eighteenth-century person who used to say, 'I can talk my face away in twenty-five minutes.' And Jimmy could do that." To a point, perhaps. In the gay demimonde, where looks count for a great deal, Baldwin was not a success, even after he became famous, and he tended to be attracted to straight and bisexual men, who increased the sense of isolation he fed on. Even Lucien, his great love, was primarily attracted to women. For Baldwin, the first principle of love was love withheld; it was all he had ever known.

His second novel, "Giovanni's Room" (1956), traces a tragic affair between two men—a white American drifter and an Italian bartender amid the bars and *hôtels particuliers* of postwar Paris. The melodramatic plot—in which each man really does kill the thing he loves—creates, in microcosm, the sentimental, histrionic tone of Baldwin's later, unwieldy novels, notably "Another Country."

"Giovanni's Room" isn't exactly self-affirming, but the fact that he wrote about the world of his sexuality at all is extraordinary, given the year and his race. (So intense was the stern Puritanism of most blacks I knew while I was growing up that one was not simply a faggot but a damned faggot.) When "Giovanni's Room" was published, Howard recalls, "it was regarded as an exceptional book, and gay people were proud that such a thing existed. And that it should have been written by a black person was kind of phenomenal."

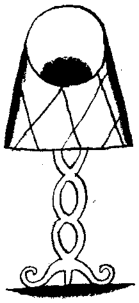
It was in Baldwin's essays, unencumbered by the requirements of narrative form, character, and incident, that his voice was most fully realized. And his attacks on the straight-white-boy gatekeepers of culture and politics remain appropriately vicious. In the nineteen-fifties, his most pugnacious contemporary was Norman Mailer. In 1959, the thirty-six-year-old Mailer published "Advertisements for Myself," which contained his essay "Evaluations—Quick and Expensive Comments on the Talent in the Room." In it, he declares his admiration for James Jones and other major novelists of the time. But of Baldwin he says:

> James Baldwin is too charming a writer to be major. If in "Notes of a Native Son" he has a sense of moral nuance which is one of the few modern guides to the sophistications of the ethos, even the best of his paragraphs are sprayed with perfume. Baldwin seems incapable of saying "F— you" to the reader; instead he must delineate the cracking and the breaking and the melting and the hardening of a heart which could never have felt such sensuous growths and little deaths without being emptied as a voice.

Baldwin's subsequent essay about Mailer—"The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," published in 1961—deflates Mailer's macho posturing with his "perfumed" wit: "Norman, I can't go through the world the way you do because I haven't got your shoulders," he writes. He also pits his de-facto cool credentials against what he depicts as Mailer's privileged white petulance:

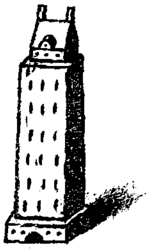
> The anguish which can overtake a white man comes in the middle of his life, when he must make the almost inconceivable effort to divest himself of everything he has ever expected, or believed, when he must take himself apart and put himself together again, walking out of the world, into limbo or into what certainly looks like limbo. This cannot yet happen to any Negro of Norman's age, for the reason that his delusions and defenses are either absolutely impenetrable by this time, or he has failed to survive them. "I want to know how power works," Norman once said to me, "how it really works, in detail." Well, I know how power works, it has worked on me, and if I didn't know how power worked, I would be dead.

In the same place, Baldwin slyly makes fun of Mailer's infatuation with the predominantly black jazz world. "Negro jazz musicians . . . really liked Norman," he writes. But they "did not for an instant consider him as being even remotely 'hip.' . . . They thought he was a real sweet ofay cat, but a little frantic." Baldwin did not, however, own up to his reciprocal fascination with straight white boys and their privilege. Certainly "Another Country," Baldwin's own "hip" book about interracial sex, gay sex, pot smoking, and nihilism, turned out to be an artistic disaster.



By the time Baldwin published "Another Country" and the essay collection "Nobody Knows My Name," both in 1962, he had become America's leading black literary star. Both books were commercially successful, but the reviews of "Another Country" were mixed. The novel centers on Rufus, a black male artist, who falls in love with a white Southern woman he meets at a party, and has sex with her on the hosts' balcony. ("He forced her beneath him and he entered her. For a moment she thought she was going to scream, she was so tight. . . . Then, from the center of his rising storm, very slowly and deliberately, he began the slow ride home. And she carried him, as the sea will carry a boat.") After becoming involved with her, Rufus is tormented by the world that cannot understand their love. He beats her; she ends up in a mental ward; he commits suicide. The subplots, about adultery, bedhopping, and ambition, are equally melodramatic. Elizabeth Hardwick astutely observed in her review for *Harper's*, "In certain respects this novel is a representation of some of the ideas about American life, particularly about the Negro in American life, that Baldwin's essays have touched upon. But what is lacking in the book is James Baldwin himself, who has in his non-fictional writing a very powerful relation to the reader."

In 1962, Baldwin's incantatory voice reached its largest magazine audience. Baldwin had agreed to write a piece about Africa for William Shawn, who was then the editor of *The New Yorker;* instead, he gave Shawn the essay that came to be known as "The Fire Next Time," which had originally been assigned him by Norman Podhoretz, of *Commentary*. The peculiar power of "The Fire Next Time" was intensified by the cultural moment at which it appeared, just as Martin Luther King's nonviolent movement was being overtaken by the violent nationalism of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam.



"The Fire Next Time," which appeared as a Letter from a Region in My Mind, detailed Baldwin's evangelical upbringing and his views on Christianity as a form of slavery forced on and then embraced by blacks: oppression as the condition of black American life. In order to escape "the ghetto mentality" and be a "truly moral human being," it was necessary for anyone, white or black, to first "divorce himself from all the prohibitions, crimes, and hypocrisies of the Christian church," Baldwin wrote. "If the concept of God has any validity or any use, it can only be to make us larger, freer, and more loving. If God cannot do this, then it is time we got rid of Him." The godhead with whom many blacks were replacing that Christian god was Allah, as represented by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. When Baldwin visited him at his home in Chicago, he was impressed by the Nation of Islam's ability to transform some of Harlem's more disreputable characters into Allah-abiding men.

Baldwin was able to maintain a skeptical view of the militancy of the Nation of Islam in his essay, and yet his admiration for strong black men is palpable. At one point, he confesses that upon encountering the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's "marvellous smile" he was reminded of the day, twenty-three years earlier, when he first met the female pastor of what would become his church. "Whose little boy are you?" she asked him. And Baldwin's orphaned heart cried out, "Why, yours!"

WITH the publication of "The Fire Next Time" in book form, in 1963, Baldwin became something of an intellectual carpetbagger. He undertook a lecture tour for the Congress on Racial Equality; he registered voters in Alabama for the Student Nonviolent Coördinating Committee; he travelled to Nairobi with Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier to celebrate Kenya's independence. On May 17th, he appeared on the cover of *Time*. William Styron recalls seeing Baldwin in an airport shortly after the book came out: "He was being followed by crews of TV reporters with microphones. He saw me from a distance, and waved, and then he was swept along by the great media wave." An essayist once known for his ability to question any party line had become the official voice of black America, and almost immediately his voice as a writer was compromised.

In 1964, Baldwin was asked by Lee Strasberg, then the director of the Actors Studio, to stage a play about the Emmett Till case, which the writer had been working on intermittently since 1958. As originally conceived, by Baldwin and Frank Cosaro, who was slotted to direct it, the play, "Blues for Mister Charlie," was to be a "balanced view" of America's racial scene. Baldwin, Cosaro says, wanted as objective a view of Mister Charlie—the white man—as of his victim, and Cosaro was impressed by that. But Baldwin couldn't ignore the political influence of the black leaders he was becoming friendly with. "He then came back to me and Strasberg," Cosaro recalls, "and said that he had to go after Mister Charlie." The result was dutiful, turgid, and unconvincing.

Baldwin had always been a preacher of one sort or another, and preaching imminent earthly damnation to liberal white folks became increasingly irresistible. Even as early as 1960, Baldwin, standing in front of Styron's fireplace in Connecticut, told his host, "Baby, we are going to burn your motherfucking houses down." By 1968, Baldwin found impersonating a black writer more seductive than being an artist. That year, he went to Hollywood to write a screen adaptation of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X." The producer, Marvin Worth, recalls, "White liberals were thrilled to have him come into their Beverly Hills houses and beat them up, say they were shit. He was a star who played on white masochism."

The irony, however, was that no matter how much Baldwin sacrificed his gifts to gain acceptance from the Black Power movement, his gestures went unrequited: while Baldwin may have been seen as a "bad nigger" by liberal whites, back in the hood he was just another twisted white boy in blackface. Eldridge Cleaver, in his 1968 "Soul on Ice," called Baldwin "a self-willed, automated slave" and "the white man's most valuable tool in oppressing other blacks." And yet, even after he'd been vilified by Cleaver, his response was appeasing and reverential. In "No Name in the Street" (1972) Baldwin referred to Cleaver as "valuable and rare," and excused his intolerance as the vigilance of "a zealous watchman on the city wall." And it is difficult to read Baldwin's description of Huey Newton in the same essay without wincing:

> There is in him a dedication as gentle as it is unyielding, absolutely single-minded. I began to realize this when I realized that Huey was always listening and always watching. No doubt he can be fooled, he's human, though he certainly can't be fooled easily; but it would be a very great mistake to try to lie to him. Those eyes take in everything, and behind the juvenile smile, he keeps a complicated scoreboard.

Baldwin's biographer, David Leeming, told me that many of the civil-rights leaders didn't want to be associated with Baldwin, because he was so openly gay; it seems to have been why the organizers of the 1963 March on Washington pointedly ignored him. In the end, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver were reincarnations of his withholding and judgmental preacher father.

By the time the Black Power movement had started to ebb, Baldwin was adrift not only politically but aesthetically. Throughout the nineteen-seventies, Styron and Mailer were working on ambitious books like "Sophie's Choice" and "The Executioner's Song," Thomas Pynchon was breaking new ground with "Gravity's Rainbow," and a prolific new generation of black women—Toni Cade Bambara, Gayl Jones, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison—was claiming the public's imagination. Baldwin's fastidious thought process and his baroque sentences suddenly seemed hopelessly outdated, at once self-aggrandizing and ingratiating. Nevertheless, up until his death, in 1987, at the age of sixty-three, Baldwin continued to harbor the hope that he would be embraced as an important literary figure by the army of his desire: the black men who had forsaken him.

WHAT became clear to me as I reread Baldwin's work (the Library of America selection mercifully excludes his ill-conceived and poorly written plays, "The Amen Corner" and "Blues for Mister Charlie," and the novels written after "Another Country") is that he never possessed a novelist's imagination or sense of structure—or, indeed, a novelist's interest in the lives of other people. Nor was he a reporter: most of his reporting pieces were stiff and banal. He was at his best when he was writing about some aspect of life or politics that reflected his interior self: he contained a multitude of worlds, and those worlds were his true subject.

But I also realized that my acute awareness of Baldwin's weaknesses as a writer stemmed from my sense of kinship with him. Certainly Baldwin understood this particular kind of ambivalence, having written the following at thirty-six, the age I am now:

> One of my dearest friends, a Negro writer now living in Spain, circled around me and I around him for months before we spoke. One Negro meeting another at an all-white cocktail party . . . cannot but wonder how the other got there. The question is: Is he for real? Or is he kissing ass? . . . Negroes know about each other what can here be called family secrets, and this means that one Negro, if he wishes, can "knock" the other's "hustle." . . . Therefore, one "exceptional" Negro watches another "exceptional" Negro in order to find out if he knows how vastly successful and bitterly funny the hoax has been.

Baldwin had been eying the competition long before he was paid to do so by any white editor. In "Notes of a Native Son" Baldwin writes that he and his stepfather circled around each other endlessly before they had their only significant conversation. One Sunday afternoon, they were walking home from church when David Baldwin broke their habitual silence:

> My father asked me abruptly, "You'd rather write than preach, wouldn't you?"
>
> I was astonished at his question—because it was a real question. I answered, "Yes."

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8	pINTO
9	HOMER (2 defs.)
11	NEGATIVE (*Evita* + *gen.* rev.)
12	TERN (*turn* hom.)
15	ULNA (hidden)
16	PUMP(KIN)S
18	LISTS (2 defs.)
19	EPEE (hidden rev.)
20	FE(T)E
21	ADO + RED

DOWN

1	QUINTUPLED (anag.)
2	pURGE
3	A + NAG + RAMS
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But in the end Baldwin could not distinguish between writing sermons and making art. He eventually returned to the pulpit—just where his stepfather had always wanted him to be.

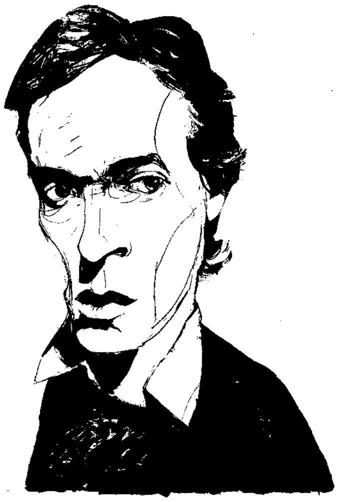
Yet there is one great Baldwin masterpiece waiting to be published—one that was composed in an atmosphere of focussed intimacy rather than in the stiff black preacher suit that was his legacy—and that is a volume of his letters. A number of them were lent to me while I was doing research for this article; they have the force and wit of his early essays and the immediacy of something written for an audience of one.

After Baldwin's death, the family's relation to their prodigal son continues to reflect the hazards of uttering family secrets. When I asked David Leeming why the Baldwin family would not allow his letters to be published, he explained that the family felt he shed a negative light on them, particularly on David Baldwin, who was their father and not his; and they were uncomfortable with his homosexuality. "They have no interest in further exploring who he was," Leeming says. The family's unease with the private Baldwin is something that he himself always understood. And yet he left his legacy in their hands. In the end, even a bastard may be reclaimed by his family. ♦

DEATH BECOMES HER

America as an imaginary country with real corpses in it.

BY JOHN LANCHESTER



Martin Amis

"Night Train," Martin Amis's ninth novel, is his first to take place entirely in the United States; specifically, in a "second-echelon American city, mildly famed for its Jap-financed Babel Tower, its harbors and marinas, its university, its futuristically enlightened corporations (computer software, aerospace, pharmaceuticals), its high unemployment, and its catastrophic inner-city taxpayer flight." Our brief moment of speculation—Baltimore? Philadelphia?—is as pointless as trying to identify the exact model for P. G. Wodehouse's Blandings Castle. For Amis, place has more to do with topos than with topography. His West London is as lovingly detailed an imaginary space as Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. It's a place of authorial high intellect, behavioral low comedy, and, above all, poetic exaggeration, where a car left on the street ends up looking like "an igloo of parking-tickets and birdcrap," where working-class characters live in tower blocks with dogs called Clive, and where novelists meet in multiracial snooker clubs full of "no-colour Brits, indistinguishable, it seemed, from the great genies of cigarette smoke that moved between the tables like the ghosts of referees."

If West London is the main stamping ground for Amis's imagination, America is his Other Place, his fictive home away from home. It's an America assembled mainly out of books and films and TV shows and fevered European dreams—an imaginary country that has more in common with the Africa of Saul Bellow's "Henderson the Rain King" or John Updike's "The Coup" than it does with anything in Rand McNally. More than four hundred years ago, John Donne apostrophized his girlfriend as "my America, my new-found-land"; to this day, European fantasies about America tend to be about newness and sex. And, of course, violence. In "The Information," Richard Tull, on his first visit to New York, "knew, the instant he arrived on its streets, that New York was the most violent thing that men had ever done to a stretch of land, more violent, in its way, than what was visited on Hiroshima, at ground zero, on day one."

It doesn't necessarily feel that way if you live there; but in Amis's scheme of things that doesn't matter much. "I would certainly sacrifice any psychological or realistic truth for a phrase, for a paragraph that has a spin on it," he has said. "That sounds whorish, but I think it's the higher consideration. Mere psychological truth in a novel doesn't seem to me all that valuable a commodity. I would sooner let the words prompt me, rather than anything I was representing." Well, it doesn't sound whorish, but it does sound unlike what novelists usually do. In fact, a working definition of a novelist might be someone who tells stories in prose and doesn't agree with that statement of Amis's. But there's an important sense in which Amis is not so much a novelist as a poet, for whom the apparatus of plot and character is merely scaffolding, and for whom the real project is to make unforgettable sentences. These sentences have made him the most admired, imitated, influential British writer of the last twenty years. (In Britain, unfortunately for him, he is also a kind of lightning rod for feelings of envy and ill will: the journalistic treatment of him has an almost surreal hostility.)

The latest narrator to stand as the dummy for Amis's inspired ventriloquism is Detective Mike Hoolihan, a forty-four-year-old policewoman "with coarse blonde hair, bruiser's tits and broad shoulders, and pale blue eyes in her head that have seen everything." Hoolihan does tend to sound more like an Amis narrator—the thirty-five-year-old Cockney advertising man John Self in "Money," say, or the terminally ill American writer Samson Young in "London Fields"—than like anyone else; but when her voice is so wonderfully funny, misanthropic, foul-mouthed, and street-smart who cares? Here she is, musing on the copycat effect: "You get copycat with suicides, too. Fuck yes.... Some asshole of a bass guitarist chokes on his own ralph (or fries on his own amplifier)—and suddenly suicide is all over town." That tough-broad note, however, is not the only one in Hoolihan's register. She is troubled and moved by the story she is telling, so much so that at times "Night Train" feels like a rebuttal to the charges of misogyny and unfeeling cool that have been levelled against its creator.

The central mystery of the novel concerns the suicide of Hoolihan's family friend Jennifer Rockwell, a "drop-dead beautiful," "to-die-for brilliant" twenty-something cosmologist. Jennifer's home life seems perfectly happy and stable (she's the daughter of a high-ranking police officer, and the offspring of a "forty-year marriage that still had fucking in it"); she's in what seems to be a deliriously happy and stable long-term relationship with a philosopher boyfriend. And then, one Sunday evening, she shoots herself in the head with a .22 revolver.

At first, Hoolihan thinks that Jennifer's suicide is inexplicable: "A woman fell out of a clear blue sky." Then she begins to find what look like reasons: the toxicology report reveals that Jennifer had been taking lithium; behind her boyfriend's back, she had made an assignation with a wildly unsuitable man in a hotel bar; at work, she had perpetrated a catastrophic mistake that came to light the day after her suicide. The clincher is Jennifer's suicide note, which appears to confirm that she had been suffering from manic depression.

Then Hoolihan finds, in Jennifer's apartment, a book called "Making Sense of Suicide," in which Jennifer has marked a passage stating that "virtually all known studies reveal that the suicidal person will give warnings and clues as to his, or her, suicidal intentions." Hoolihan comes to believe that all the clues—the lithium, the hotel pickup, and so on—are fake, planted by Jennifer to conceal the real reason for her self-murder. It wouldn't be fair to give away this reason, but it bears on Hoolihan's intuition "that the death of Jennifer Rockwell was offering the planet a piece of new news: Something never seen before."

"Night Train," like all Amis's mature fiction, seeks to be at once a crystalline verbal artifact and a work of deep feeling. The novel draws its energies equally from the linguistic pyrotechnics of Nabokov and the human immensities of Bellow (and, incidentally, it's to the Bellows that the book is dedicated). It sounds unlikely—indeed, it *is* unlikely—but the outcome is sentence after sentence that nobody else could have written. "Night Train" isn't a whodunit, or even a whydunit, but it may be the first work of a new, very Amisian, and postmodern genre, the whynotdoit. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

NO LEASE ON LIFE, by Lynne Tillman (Harcourt Brace; $21). Tillman observes the Aristotelian unities, mostly from the window of a Lower East Side tenement, where her heroine, Elizabeth Hall (a.k.a. Lizard), spends an insomniac twenty-four hours meticulously cataloguing the passing indignities: car alarms, indifferent police, crackheads in the vestibule. It's a jeremiad (interrupted by jokes that serve as both Greek chorus and local graffiti) so convincing that it makes footnotes of the day's banner news: O.J. driving to Brentwood is a minor event compared with Lizard tossing eggs at the "morons" around a boom box.

THE WONDER WORKER, by Susan Howatch (Knopf; $25.95). In this eminently readable plum pudding, everyone who sticks in his thumb pulls out a prize: Alice, a *cordon bleu* chef who's freed by her great-aunt's death to stir up a new life; Lewis, an elderly priest doubly beset by lust and his late great-uncle Cuthbert; Nicholas, a charismatic healer; and his wife, Rosalind, a Sloane Ranger manquée turned flower freak. The setting is St. Benet's, a London parish church, and while every character displays a level of eccentricity verging on the gothic, Howatch's good-humored tone keeps the whole—just—from collapsing.

T.R.: THE LAST ROMANTIC, by H. W. Brands (Basic; $35). Theodore Roosevelt remains the most perplexing of our great men, and this engaging, intimate biography explores both his achievements and his incongruities (his reforms at a time when American business and government were as corrupt as any modern Third World country's; his evolution from a shoot-anything-that-moves hunter to a founding father of the American conservation movement). If there is something childish about his unfailing gusto, there is something winning, too, and though Brands is by no means uncritical, the reader feels (and shares) his attraction to his subject.

THE PLEASURES OF THE IMAGINATION, by John Brewer (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $40). No century is like another, of course. But the eighteenth century in England witnessed an early emanation of self-consciousness no less transforming than that of the Renaissance. It was also, Brewer says, a time when the arts shifted in relation to their audience, and he traces that shift in music, painting, literature, and spectacle. The result is a well-written aesthetic and social history of wide-ranging satisfactions.

NEVER LET ME DOWN, by Susan J. Miller (Holt; $22.50). Miller's father would have been a blight on his family even without being a secret-drug-addict hipster. He was judgmental and self-centered—never noticing, for example, that his son was regularly and brutally beating his daughter. Yet it was only when, at twenty-one, she learned about his addiction that she could begin the process of unravelling the pain and mystery of her working-class, intellectual Jewish family. This elegantly constructed memoir is precise, insightful, and strangely healing to read.

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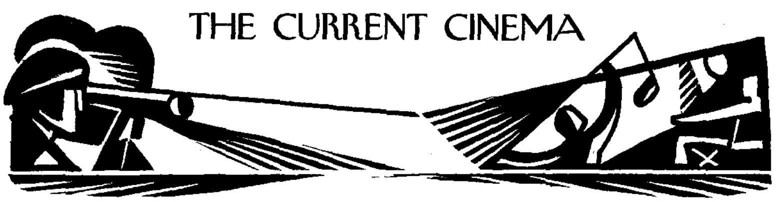


A FILM OF ONE'S OWN

Virginia Woolf—home at last.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

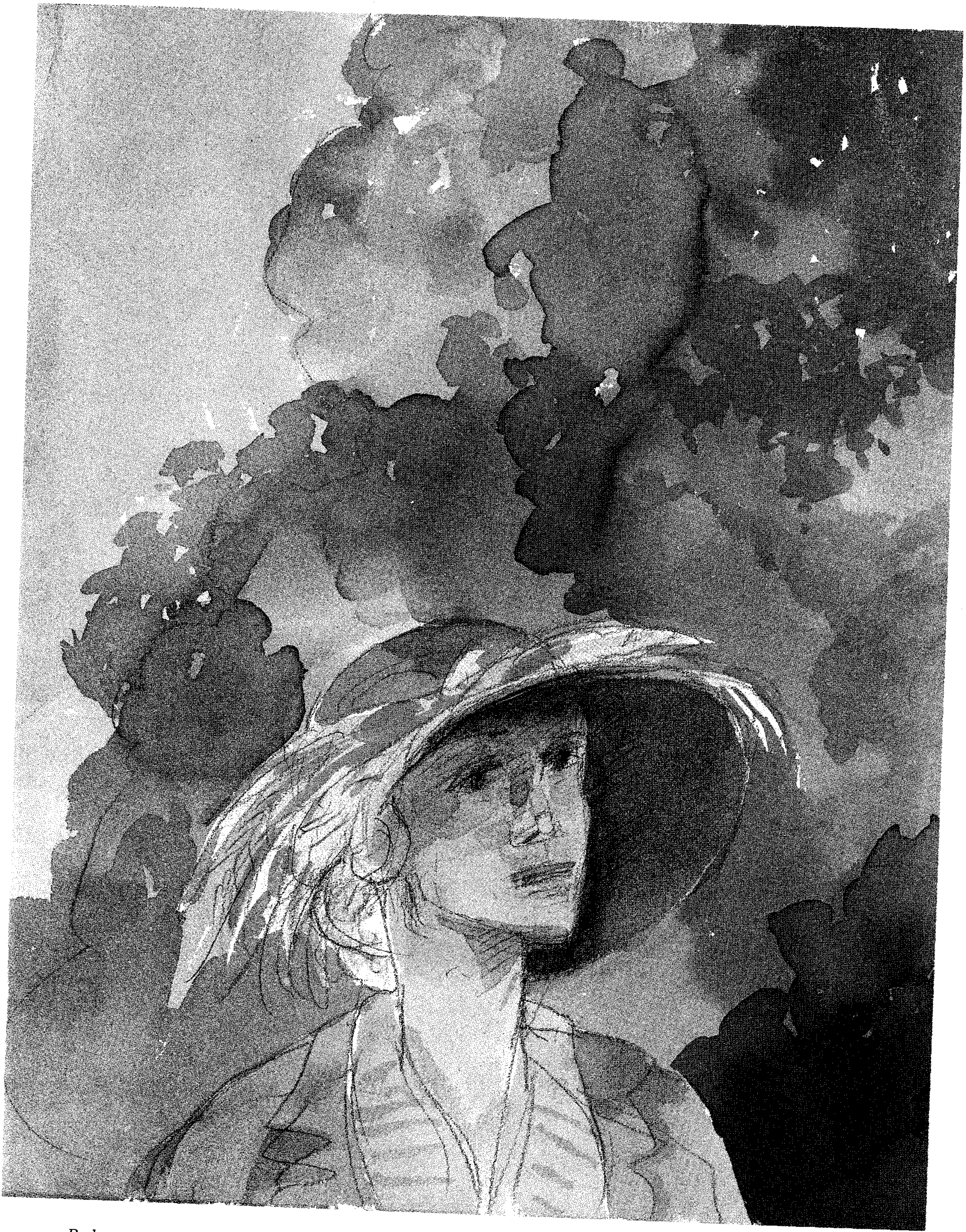
I WENT to see "Mrs. Dalloway," based on the novel by Virginia Woolf, with the sort of anxiety—compounded of equal parts fear and hopefulness—which might more reasonably accompany the birth of a child. The book's celebrated stream of consciousness is one of the few genuine innovations in the history of the novel; it either wins you over or puts you off, and in my case it made Woolf an abiding literary passion. I worried that the delicate latticework of the writing—its loop-the-loop involutions—would be crushed in the transfer to a visual medium. The auguries, however, were good. The screenplay was by Eileen Atkins, the gifted writer and actress who had already shown herself so attuned to Woolf's quicksilver sensibility in "A Room of One's Own," and in "Vita and Virginia," in which she played Woolf to Vanessa Redgrave's Sackville-West. Another good sign was the casting of Redgrave in the difficult role of the snobbish, fragile Mrs. Dalloway. And Marleen Gorris, who wrote and directed the quirkily observed "Antonia's Line," was a clever choice of director for the intensely female, hothouse climate of the novel.

The film's first ten minutes or so seemed pell-mell, as though Atkins and Gorris were trying, from every angle, to capture the scattered perspective with which Clarissa Dalloway views the world on a perfect June day in 1923, on the eve of one of her famous parties. While she informs the housemaid that she intends to go out and buy the flowers herself we are given flashbacks of the young Clarissa (Natascha McElhone) in a long white dress, sitting around with her best friend (Lena Headey) and agreeing that "marriage is a catastrophe for women," or resisting the attentions of young Peter Walsh (Alan Cox), because he demands too much of her. Smartly dressed, armed against the sun with a parasol, Mrs. Dalloway sallies into Bond Street, thinking aloud her Virginia Woolfish thoughts in Vanessa Redgrave's throaty voice, which melts over words like honey. "No more marrying, no more having children . . . just Mrs. Dalloway," she muses, struck by the distance between the dreamy past and the intractable present. We begin to sense something vulnerable under the indomitable façade—as if the "perfect hostess" she has become is at odds with the wide-eyed, frisky girl she once was.

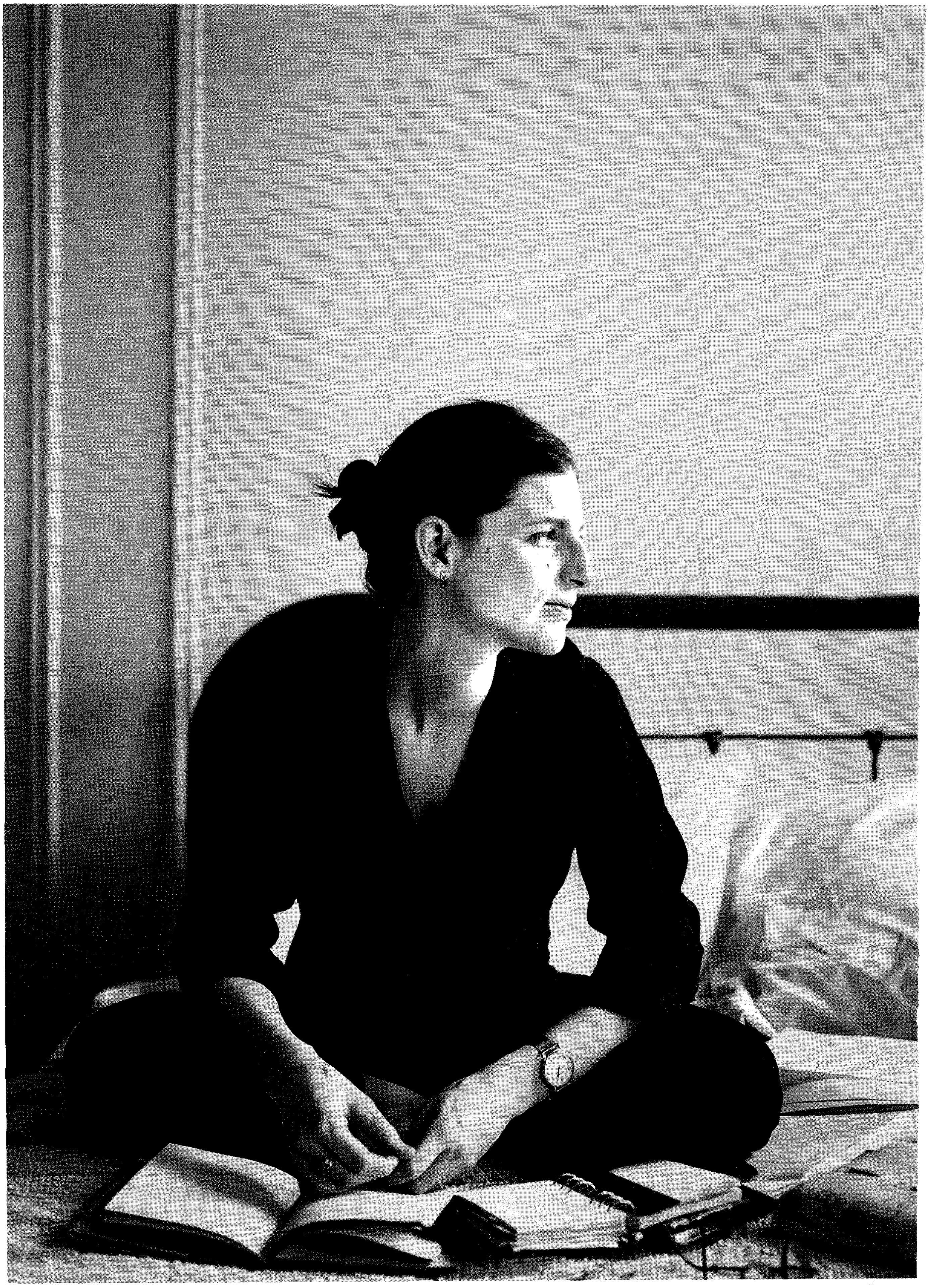
A remarkable achievement of Woolf's novel is the way it plants the suspicion that Mrs. Dalloway's exquisitely constructed world is an easily stormed edifice—that she lives for her parties because they're a way of blotting out chaos. What the book achieves by indirection the film establishes from the outset, in a brief scene set in Italy during the Great War: a young English soldier, crouched behind barbed wire, tries to warn a comrade not to advance; he can't be heard, and the young man is blown to bits. The survivor will turn out to be Septimus Warren Smith (Rupert Graves), a shell-shocked veteran, whom we come to see as Mrs. Dalloway's alter ego. That their lives—his doomed, hers determinedly sunny—are strangely linked is made explicit when Mrs. Dalloway glimpses Septimus acting out one of his nightmarish delusions beyond the windows of her upper-crust florist.

The film's use of voice-over adroitly substitutes for the novel's interior monologues, by which Woolf hoped to "dig out [the] beautiful caves" in her characters. We hear Mrs. Dalloway brooding to herself as she descends a spiral staircase; her thoughts have the portentousness of an overture: "Those ruffians, the gods, shan't have it all their own way. Those gods who never lose a chance of hurting, thwarting and spoiling human lives. . . . It's so dangerous to live for only one day."

The viewer is asked to keep track of so much fleeting material that I found



Redgrave as Mrs. Dalloway: Ideal casting as a heroine whose feelings are at odds with her indomitable façade.



LIFE AND LETTERS

GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES

BEING clever seems to be an ambiguous fate for New York women. In Edith Wharton's time, it wasn't ladylike; later, in the age of Dorothy Parker and Anita Loos, it wasn't sexy; and even now, despite feminism, it isn't easy. "A Working Girl Can't Win" is the title of Deborah Garrison's just published book, and the poems in it are mostly about why this is so. She isn't "a vamp on the rise through the ranks/of literary Gods and military men"; she is a faithful wife who loves to cook and hates to presume and is thereby doomed twice over. As Garrison sees it, men are a great disappointment to a smart career girl: the chest-thumping "alpha males" in the office (perhaps *The New Yorker's*, where she has worked since her college days) whom she has to listen to sympathetically; the lovers who are never quite ardent enough; the father she can't please, who prefers her kid sister. She sees through them all and doesn't much like herself for doing so.

Her tone of voice is casual and self-knocking but full of life, and so are the forms she uses: the middle of one line rhymes with the end of the next; the language is slangy and hip, the descriptions deft ("the sun is tart,/the river the very color of cold,/November on her way to winter"). The over-all effect is precise and unassuming, naked and sidelong at the same time. And, just to make sure that no one can accuse her of pretentiousness, she sends up her first collection of poems with a literary in-joke. Echoing the original table of contents in Robert Frost's "A Boy's Will," the title of each poem is tagged by a sanctimonious little summary. "Saying Yes to a Drink," for example, is followed by "*She is young, and dreams of giving herself over.*"

According to Kingsley Amis, "Women are really much nicer than men;/No wonder we like them." Deborah Garrison's poems tell us how much that niceness costs. They are a triumph of wit and modesty over cleverness. —A. ALVAREZ

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe

myself wondering whether great novels—especially great flighty novels—should ever leave the printed page. But then somewhere into the first half hour the movie begins to click: a crisscrossing of words and images emerges, uncannily like the patterns of Woolf's prose. The evocative soundtrack gives dramatic sequence to the film's meandering rhythms, and the novel's shifts between past and present, memory and actuality, are surprisingly well served by the editing. Atkins's screenplay succeeds in preserving the mandarin lyricism of Woolf's language without slipping into the "poetic." The performances are a triumph of ensemble acting—so cohesive that I felt as though these people might really know each other beyond the frames. John Standing gives the stolid, reliable Richard Dalloway an amplitude he lacks in the novel. Margaret Tyzack is wonderfully overbearing in the small role of Lady Bruton, and Amelia Bullmore is touching as Septimus's frantic Italian wife. Natascha McElhone's young Clarissa Dalloway is perhaps too robust; her bluntness is so removed from Redgrave's distracted elegance as to suggest a case of multiple personality rather than the encroachment of middle age.

"Mrs. Dalloway" 's great set piece is a party scene which is so fluid and richly observed that it makes a novel of its own. We see the windows of the Dalloways' house in Westminster all lit up; the vivid flowers and gleaming silver; the men and women in evening dress ascending the stairs. We eavesdrop on the complex encounter between Mrs. Dalloway and a grownup Peter Walsh (Michael Kitchen), who has just returned to London after years in India. While she agitates to herself ("It's a disaster, the party's a disaster, I'm humiliated"), he thinks of her with the hopeless muddle of disapproval and yearning he felt as a young man ("Look at her, intoxicated by it all, thinking she's brilliant!").

It is high tribute to the movie that after it was over I went home and reread the novel. I kept seeing Vanessa Redgrave standing at Mrs. Dalloway's party, her posture impeccable, her large blue eyes alert with concealed regrets. This left me less free to envision Clarissa Dalloway as I might once have, but that scarcely matters when the elusive, mercurial spirit of Virginia Woolf has been caught, its heart still beating, on the screen. ♦

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THE THEATRE

DARK MEAT

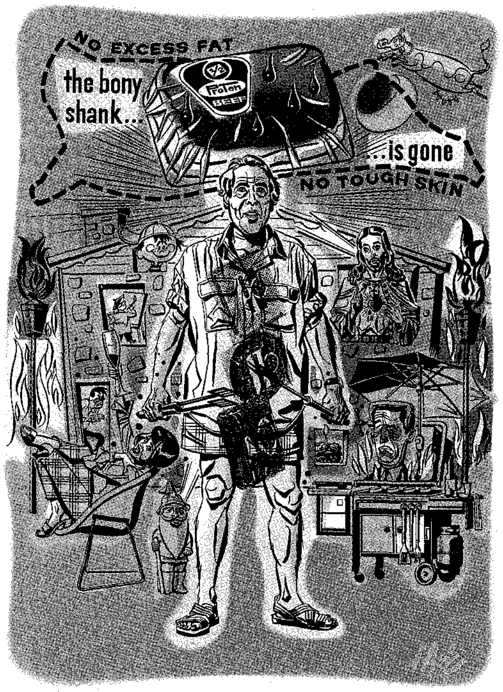
Two playwrights cut into capitalism's underbelly.

BY JOHN LAHR

ERIC BOGOSIAN has chosen Chicago's Goodman Theatre, appropriately situated between its stockyards and its Miracle Mile, to launch "Griller," his latest firestorm aimed at suburban hunter-gatherers. The object of the title is a three-thousand-dollar blue enamelled state-of-the-art barbecue—complete with intercom—that is the proud possession of Gussie (the bluff, funny Robert Klein), a rock-group road manager turned travel agent whose Fourth of July family cookout also happens to be his birthday party. This narrative conceit allows Bogosian to take on both America's and Gussie's sense of smug well-being.

Gussie is "King of the Patio," and meat—huge heaped slabs of marbled steak—is the metaphor for his success as a predator. "I'm a fucking survivor," he announces. "Let's face it, it's survival of the fittest and the smartest." Barbecue touches some atavistic male nerve—food dragged back to the cave to be devoured after the thrill of the hunt. Here Gussie's little cave of comfort is Derek McLane's behemoth two-story gray stone house, whose sliding glass doors open onto an emerald-green lawn. A high hedge serves as a kind of wall of wealth to keep the inhabitants safe from every intrusion. "You see the security system I got in that house?" Gussie says, surveying his domain over brandy and cigars. He goes on, " 'Armed response.' Twenty-four hours a day. Those guys show up, you don't know the password? They shoot you. That's it. That's security. It's expensive, but fuckit what else am I going to spend the money on?" What really gives Gussie a sense of security is surplus. He's got Warhols on his wall, a Mercedes in his driveway, and a thirty-thousand-dollar pool in his back yard. "I like spending money," he says. "I like buying stuff. Having stuff. I like to look around at my stuff and think, I can afford all this shit."

In this cartoonish study of provincial suburban life—Turgenev meets Red Grooms—Bogosian superbly creates the atmosphere of appetite: a dream of wanting in which everything desired is worthless. Each member of Gussie's family is ravenous for something. His peppy wife, Michelle (Karen Valentine), wants to stay forever young. His dutiful sister, Gloria (Caroline Aaron), hankers for release from the burden of taking care of their aged mother, Granma Betty (Irma St. Paule), who is a few sandwiches short of a picnic. The voluptuous daughter-in-law, Roz (Nahanni Johnstone), is hungry for sex and for some meaning to the aimless spending spree she calls her life. Her husband, Terence (the excellent Marc Grapey), Gussie's firstborn, is a workaholic stockbroker—another expert in making a killing. "I don't care if he falls over with a heart



Robert Klein is King of the Patio in Eric Bogosian's new play, "Griller."

attack," Terence yells into the phone at an underling. "Ream his butt till he bleeds." His younger brother, Dylan (the compelling Mark Ruffalo), is a would-be artist turned junkie, living off handouts from his parents and using his collapse as a kind of emotional blackmail: "You ever think maybe I want a BMW, too? I'm your fucking son!"

"Griller" is a pageant of brutish immaturity which conveys Bogosian's clear-eyed view of our cultural neurosis. In his introduction to "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll" Bogosian writes about the urge to have everything all the time: "It is the point of view of a child. It is the point of view of the rock culture on which I grew up. It is my point of view." He continues, "My own need to 'do the right thing' as a friend, as a parent, as an artist, as a lover, and as a citizen battles my need to be a big baby. The result is paralysis with a coating of guilt."

If there's not much guilt on display in "Griller," there's certainly a lot of paralysis. Only big-bellied Uncle Tony (the mischievous Howard Witt), a friend of the family with a murky history as a United States military operative, seems capable of action. He serves as a kind of amoral life force: he skinny-dips in the pool, passes a joint to Granma Betty, stirs up family dissension. He also puts the moves on Roz and Gloria. "I wake up hard, I go to bed hard. Like a rock, like a diamond drill bit," he says.

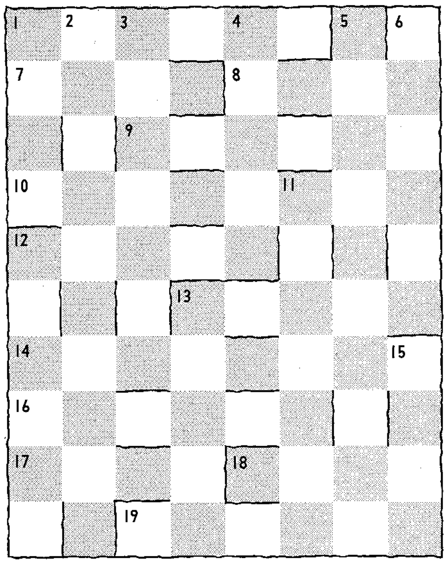
Tony knows that what's food for the pike is death for the minnow; he reminds Gussie that barbarism is the price of America's abundance. Tony tells of interrupting a Latino family at their supper—"Something about being in the presence of an American-made automatic weapon really slows people down"—and then slitting their throats. To cap the story, he pisses on the grill. "I made you," Tony hectors Gussie. "Those families I used to 'visit.' They were good people. Farmers, activists, even nuns. People who gave, they didn't take. Loved each other. Lived." He adds, "All you people do is shop and shit."

Tony pays for delivering this dose of disenchantment with his life: he's bludgeoned to death by Gussie with a pepper grinder in the shape of a garden gnome. And, as Uncle Tony's body floats in the pool, the fireworks begin to light up the night sky, and the family hurries off to see the display. "Just leave it," Gussie says about the mess they've made. "We'll clean it up later." The schizoid split in the American character between savagery and sentiment is hilariously caught by Bogosian in the last beats of the play. "Michelle," Roz says to her mother-in-law, glancing toward the pool, "except for this, today was lovely, thank you." "Griller," which is directed by Robert Falls, is a work in progress, and its pace and some of its plot still need souping up. The play covers familiar territory, but it burns brightly in the focussed white heat of Bogosian's fury.

"MEAT" is also one of the neon words—along with "bed," "shopping," "sex," and "fucking"—that flash behind the thin drama of "Shopping and Fucking" (at the New York Theatre Workshop), a small, sketchy piece of British boulevard nihilism co-directed by Gemma Bodinetz and Max Stafford-Clark. Here the first-time playwright Mark Ravenhill, who definitely has a gift for dialogue, attempts to dramatize capitalism's warping effect on life and relationships. This crude catalogue of fashionable degradations begins with vomiting and quickly escalates to drug addiction, masturbation, buggery, ass-licking, phone sex, and murder, as the play's various lost souls struggle to make a living or to make peace with themselves. In the two interminable hours it takes to spin this tale, Philip Seymour Hoffman turns in an excellent performance as Mark, the limp-wristed Lucky Pierre in a ménage à trois; and Torquil Campbell makes the role of Gary, the doomed hustler, a compelling study of British anomie. Otherwise, the play seems tricked out rather than thought out. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the finale. Ravenhill, who enjoys having the actors bare their asses to each other, now kisses ours by providing a kind of happy ending: the dysfunctional ménage à trois holds together—a nineties low-rent "Design for Living." This is the ultimate obscenity. ♦

8x10 CRYPTIC

NO. 33 BY MIKE SHENK



ACROSS

1 Grill in rose garden soaked up sun (6)
7 Make engravings and the like with bit of heat (4)
8 Then Pacino heads west in Asian nation (4)
9 Floats high above Scotland's capital (6)
10 Family taking shelter with one Iranian leader (8)
12 Carolina senator acts as director (5)
13 Lived like a lecher, turning decadent at last (5)
14 Bullfighter's cheer about holding audition (8)
16 A river vessel carries a Mideastern leader (6)
17 Lives near the French resort in the tropics (4)
18 Spotted tying up loose ends (4)
19 Bow in front of Arkansas disk jockey (6)

DOWN

1 Bill or Arthur beginning to kneel (4)
2 Matthew or Stewart hiding under least favorable conditions (2,3,5)
3 One engaged in study of the sun around church (7)
4 Santa's workers left stocking December 24th and 31st (5)
5 Blue stream enters bend (10)
6 Help guitar player after opening (6)
11 Deceit: a mixed drink (4,3)
12 Returning to put in locks—it's a bunch of nonsense (3,3)
13 Table supplied with more food from the South (5)
15 Attorney General upset one Republican (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 32 appears on page 79. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for seven combined issues: Feb. 23 & Mar. 2, Apr. 27 & May 4, June 22 & 29, Aug. 24 & 31, Oct. 19 & 26, Dec. 14 & 21, Dec. 28 & Jan. 4) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXIV, No. 1, February 16, 1998. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $39.95; two years, $72.00. In Canada, one year, $83.00 (includes GST and HST where applicable). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $91.00, payable in advance.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80328-6447. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

SHOUTS & MURMURS

DEAR AMANDA

BY STEVE MARTIN

Dear Amanda,

I think we have made the right decision. Thank you for your love these past five months. I want you to know that our time together will live inside me in a special place in my heart. It is best if we do not phone or write.

Love always,
Joey

Dear Amanda,

I dialed you last night because the Lucy "pie" episode was on and I knew you'd want to see it. Anyway, while I was leaving a message I accidentally punched in your message-retrieval code. Sorry about that. Who's Francisco? Just curious.

Joey

Dear Amanda,

I realized that I still have your set of six Japanese sake cups that I bought for you on our trip downtown and was wondering when might be a good time to drop them by. You can give me a call at the usual number, or maybe at the office before seven, but then try the car, or I'm usually home now by seven-forty-five. I would like to get these back to you, as I know you must be thinking about them. This will be my last letter.

Regards,
Joey

Dear Amanda,

It was a lucky coincidence that my cat leaped on your speed-dial button last night, as it gave us a chance to talk again. Afterward, I was wondering what you meant when you said, "It's over, Joey. Get it into your head." So many interpretations. Oh, I found myself on your street last night and noticed a yellow Mustang that I don't remember ever seeing at your apartment complex. Does this belong to the mysterious Francisco I've heard rumors about? I left one of the sake cups at your front door; it happened to be in my car.

With respect,
Joey

Dear Amanda,

This will be the last letter I write you. I hate to hurt you like this, but I'm seeing someone new. You'd like her. But please do not call Marisa at the Kings Kafe where she waitresses from noon to eight. Incidentally, I heard that Francisco had or is having a tax problem. Should I meet with him? I'm over it all now and would be glad to help. Also, a word of warning: Latins. One woman is never enough.

Joey

P.S. Do you have my red Pentel pen? I really need it. Page me when you get this.

Dear Amanda,

Guess what. I got a weekend job washing windows at your apartment building! The guys in legal think I'm nuts, but it's something I've always enjoyed doing. Remember how I used to love to do the windshield even at the full-service pump? Just wanted to warn you, as I will probably be wearing your favorite outfit of mine: the tan pants, my blue Gap shirt, and my foam "Go Gators" hat. It's so easy to start things up again, and I wouldn't want to think it was because of my newly acquired stomach ripples. By the way, there's someone named Francisco trying to pick up girls on the Internet. Hmm. I wonder.

J.

Dear Amanda,

This will be the last letter I write to you. I'm quite upset that you changed your phone without a forwarding number. There could be an emergency, and I'm still in possession of those fancy upholstered hangers of yours. Marisa questioned them the other day and it wasn't fun. They're probably too dear to you for me to throw them out, as we bought them together at the swap meet the day your mother raved about me, telling you I was "pleasant." Please come by and pick them up; they're seriously damaging my relationship. A good time would be any Wednesday after five but not after seven, Fridays all day except lunch, Monday is good, and the weekend, anytime. Also Tuesday.

Joey

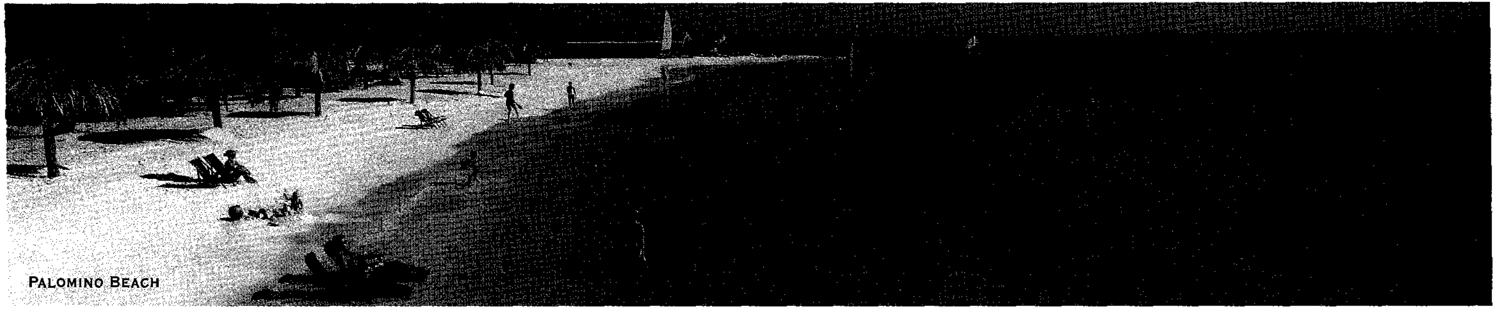
Dear Amanda,

Valentine's Day is tomorrow and I hope you don't mind my throwing this note through your window, as the post would be too slow. The rock it's tied to came from our desert trip! I'm wondering if you'd like to get together for a quick lunch on the fourteenth? I need to get my letters back from you, and could you bring this one, too? I'll meet you at Wavy Dave's, at our old table. I'll bring the hangers, and I also want you to have the small photo of me nude skydiving. I don't think I can handle all the sake cups but I could certainly bring a few. You can even bring Francisco if you want; maybe I could help him sort out his heavy urology bills. Can you let me know soon? I'm waiting outside on the lawn.

This will be the last letter I write to you.

Love you always,
Joey ♦

READY FOR DEPARTURE?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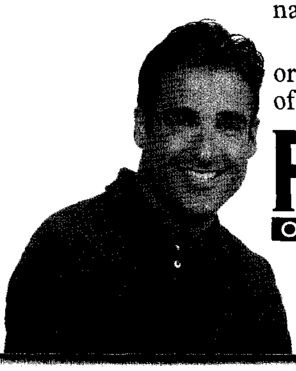

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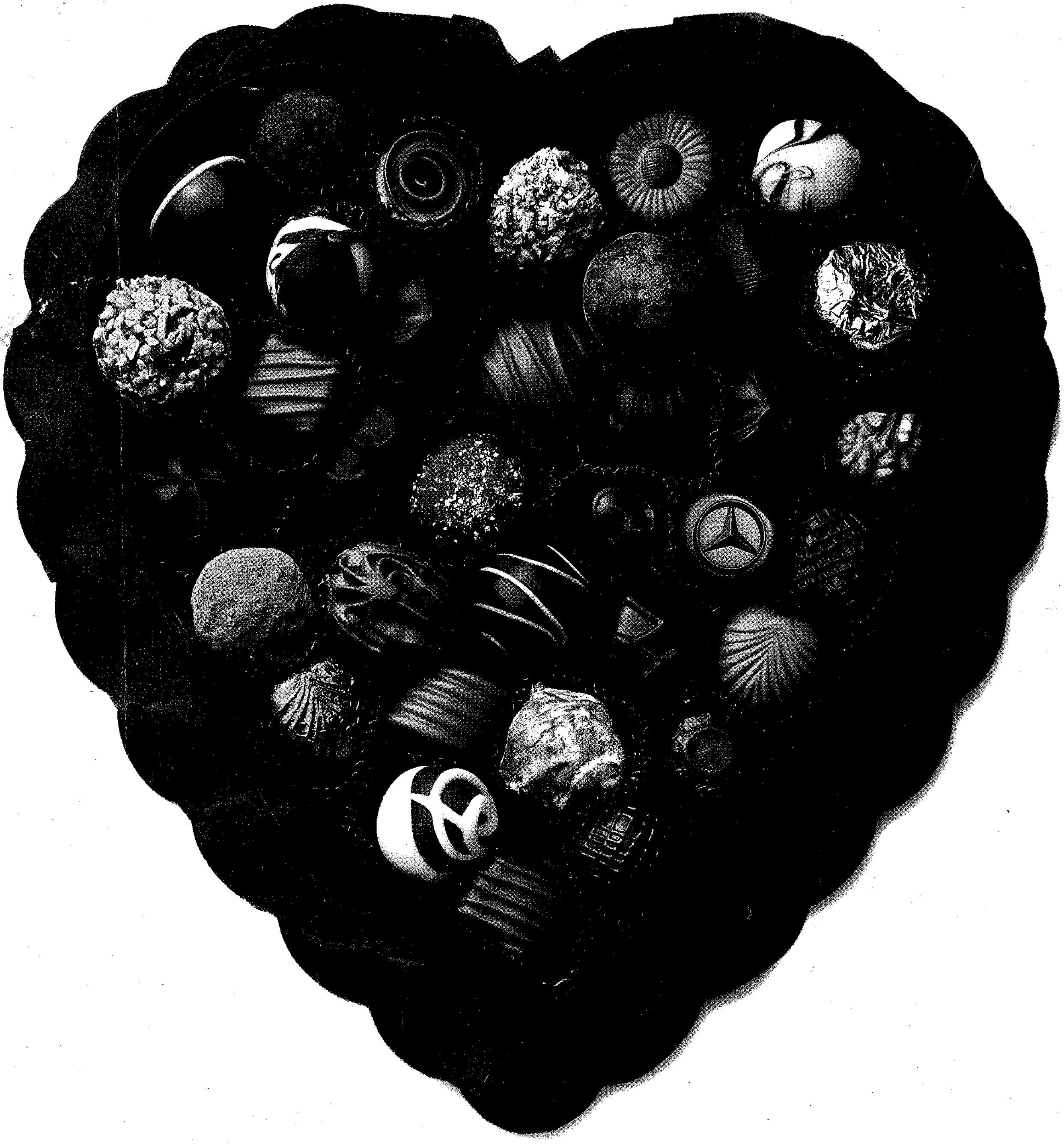

Love